

By the same Author



POLAND THE UNEXPLORED

POLAND TODAY

COME WITH ME THROUGH KRAKOW

COME WITH ME THROUGH WARSAW

HEROES OF LIBERTY (with a chapter on Sobieski,
the saviour of Vienna)

FLAGS (with a story of the Polish flag, "The White Eagle")

STORIES OF THE WORLD'S HOLIDAYS

(with an account of Poland's Third of May)



ILLINOIS, THE STORY OF THE PRAIRIE STATE

WOMEN IN AMERICAN HISTORY

HUNGARY, LAND OF CONTRASTS

COME WITH ME THROUGH BUDAPEST



JOZEF PILSUDSKI

PILSUDSKI

BUILDER OF POLAND

By
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SCOTT AND MORE
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I.

1863.

The year 1863.

Pickett's charge at Gettysburg and the fall of Vicksburg, the beginning of the end of the Civil War in America. Palmerston frowning down all efforts for a second Reform Bill in Great Britain. Napoleon III and the expedition to Mexico. Bismarck's first year as premier. In Italy the government discussing the evacuation of Rome by the French troops. The death of a Danish king and German soldiers marching into Holstein.

What about 1863? Was it so important? In most of the world, no. To the Poles, yes. One can't say "to Poland," for there was no Poland on the map of Europe. The word lived only in the hearts of the people who were apportioned among three alien empires—Austria, Russia, Germany. Though it was divided into many parts, Italy was still "a geographical expression." Poland was not even that; it was an ideal, a patriotic aspiration.

The prey of three strong, greedy, unscrupulous neighbors, Poland had been partitioned once, twice, three times—the last was 1795; but she had never accepted this fate passively. There was the vigorous protest led by Kosciuszko; after a generation the insurrection of 1830; another armed protest in 1846-8; and a third in 1863.

It marks the last of the three tragic insurrections, sudden uprisings of a people who could endure no more; a vain attempt to win independence from the most powerful government of Europe, hopeless from the outset in view of the immense preponderance of the Russian forces and the apathetic attitude of western Europe.

There were not lacking straws showing how the wind blew in Warsaw. Demonstrations in the streets, crowds gathering at the Sigismund column and dispersed by Cossacks and Russian cannon; the "patriotic hymn" sung Sunday after Sunday in the churches, in spite of spies who chalkmarked the leaders' shoulders, a signal to the police waiting on the steps to arrest them; the funeral of the widow of a Polish general in the last insurrection which was less a funeral than a great patriotic manifestation. All this would have told a wiser government than the czar's that something was being planned.

The Russians felt secure enough. Power and numbers and money were theirs. More than once in the last two years they had searched the city of Warsaw for arms and confiscated all they found. In December of 1862 came reports of mysterious purchases of arms and ammunition in Paris. The agents were arrested, the papers turned over to the Russian authorities. The Poles were making ready for an insurrection.

The best move would be, the Russians decided, not to suppress it, but to irritate the people so that it would break out before preparations were completed. On the orders of the governor of Warsaw troops marched into the churches during a service in memory of the national hero Kosciuszko, and arrested more than two thousand Poles. Conscription was introduced and some thousands of young men belonging to the best families were suddenly summoned for military service. Some of them were warned in time to escape to the forests near the city. Others were seized in their beds and sent as recruits to

Russian regiments far away in Siberia. Five hundred young men, listed as political suspects because of their patriotic tendencies, were arrested en masse.

Incensed, the Poles would endure no more. The whole country blazed into revolt, ready or no. Soldiers had been formed into groups of ten, the tens into hundreds. Some had learned a few rules of fighting. Their supply of arms totaled scarcely six hundred guns, some swords and revolvers, some scythes.

A Central Committee was formed with seven members, who organized a civil government—secret, invisible, but very powerful. So secret indeed, its business carried on with such precautions that the chief, Traugutt, remained a stranger to some of his colleagues till, captured by the Russians, they met for the first time at the foot of the gallows.

On the night of January twenty-first at twenty-six points Poles boldly attacked the hundred thousand Russian troops stationed in their country. In fourteen more places they assembled but made no attack. Four were failures; eight were marked successes; one group took eighty prisoners and a hundred rifles; while another, provided with only a few hunting guns and scythes, attacked three regiments—and won the day.

Thousands of people knew the date, but the secret was well kept. The Russians were completely surprised. Such scattered attacks made them feel the movement was widespread. A good start, but the Poles had planned no farther. For ten days they waited while the czar's generals concentrated their soldiers and worked out plans for a campaign. Russia was just then at peace and free to exert her whole armed force to suppress the uprising.

At the beginning the Poles were full of hope. Peasants and workmen would side with the insurrection, give them a little time. They counted on troops from the enemy too, but only one regiment went over to them. They would have help from western Europe—men and money

10 and arms; but vague promises proved to be words only that were never translated into concrete aid. They had to fight alone.

They lacked arms and ammunition and artillery. They lacked all the material things required for preparing for actual warfare. They lacked military training and experienced generals and a commander-in-chief. Their best man was arrested just before the insurrection broke out and spent the whole time in prison. Their only quarters were the forests, their only source of supplies requisitions.

They seemed to think, commented a Polish historian fifty years later, that if they were morally prepared nothing else counted and they would win out—somehow, by a miracle. There was too little military preparation, too little organizing among the people, they were too much buoyed up by hopes of outside help.

They did win one small battle, but from February on all initiative was in the hands of the enemy. The Polish volunteers numbered perhaps fifteen thousand, but they were scattered here and there. They fought in little groups, seldom cooperating. They could not follow up what tiny successes they had. Only one leader had as large a force as three thousand.

By August the movement was at its strongest. Some recruits had come from Polish groups abroad. A few foreign officers joined. Men and arms came from Austrian Poland and from German Poland. If the peasants did not rise, strength came from the intelligentsia of the towns and kept the insurrection going. The secret civil government gained in power.

The troops became more experienced. More and more arms were received till nearly half the Poles had rifles and could compete with the Russians. They numbered about thirty thousand—one to six, and the enemy were well equipped, wanting nothing. They fought gallantly, desperately, against great odds; witness the battle that

lems. A day was to come when he would take the nation 247
in hand; not yet.

Some time before Madame Pilsudska had bought a few acres of land in the pine forests at Sulejowek (Soo-le-yo'-vek), half an hour by train from Warsaw. There the Legions built for the Marshal a villa—an unpretentious house of seven rooms, as simple as was his life. In this quiet country home he lived for three years, with his wife and their two daughters. Always afraid that the opposition might attack him with violence, the First Brigade insisted on his having a guard and appointed two N.C.O.'s and two adjutants to go everywhere with him. These were coveted posts, every young sergeant and lieutenant, every captain and major longed to be chosen.

During his retirement he rested and thought. Occasionally he gave lectures on military subjects in Warsaw. He gave one for the benefit of former political prisoners, with the fascinating title, *The Psychology of the Prisoner*. Who knew that better than Pilsudski who had lived in no less than ten prisons, in Poland and Siberia, in Russia and Germany? His wants were few, for the household was very simple. He supported his family by writing.

He took up the manuscript written at Magdeburg, revised it somewhat to make clear the points where economy of paper had resulted in too great economy of words, and it was published as *Moje Pierwsze Boje* (in the French translation, *Mes Premiers Combats*). He wrote *Rok 1920*, a straight-forward account of the memorable campaign against the Bolshevists, with many humorous and picturesque touches, a keen analysis of his own strategy and of his opponent's; his reply to the lectures Tuchaczewski gave in Moscow with the significant title, *The Advance Beyond the Vistula*.

He wrote also an interesting series of magazine articles, *Historical Corrections*, giving his version of various events in which he had been a participator. He

did now and then a newspaper article, scathing criticisms about the administration of the army by his political opponents.

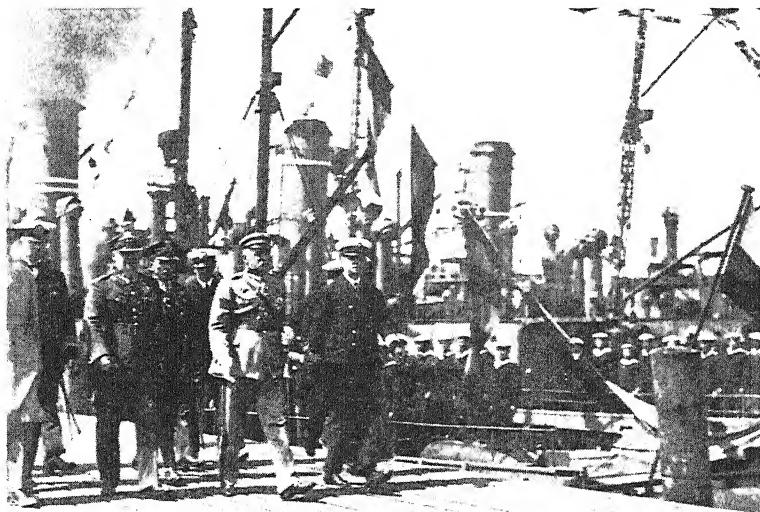
Often he wrote all night long. It had always been his habit to work at night, when he thought best; no one disturbed him then—not the many persons who took up his time in Warsaw, not the children with whom he played at Sulejowek. When he was in good health he never slept more than six hours.

But writing was not so strenuous as the war years or battling with the Sejm. This was another of his periods of apparent inactivity—the last of his life. The summers were spent at a watering-place in the north of Poland, Druskieniki (Droos-kee-eh-nee'-kee), where he benefited from the invigorating mineral springs. There are big forests there, and many islands in the picturesque river Niemen. The Pilsudskis lived in the simple cottage of a gardener, which was deeply secluded in a lovely spot above a little stream. Foreign visitors were amazed at its unpretentiousness.

Out of office, out of politics, Pilsudski was not permitted to live in strict retirement as a plain private citizen. Many persons went to him for advice. His friends kept him closely informed of what was happening. He still had great influence in public affairs. The common people thought of him as the saviour of the nation, the only man who could secure a better fortune for Poland.

In a silence almost absolute, a voluntary exile, he passed those years of his retirement. His popularity in the army did not lessen. On each nineteenth of March, his name-day, nearly every regiment sent a delegation to Sulejowek to present their greetings to the Chief.

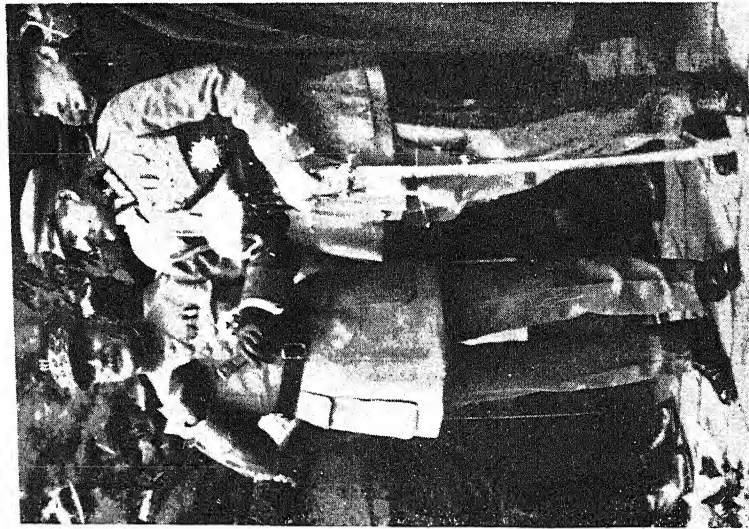
During those three years there came one political crisis after another, one Cabinet after another. It was a difficult time all over Europe, a chaotic period marked by confusion, corruption, party quarrels, and the absence of constructive work. Particularly so in Poland where the



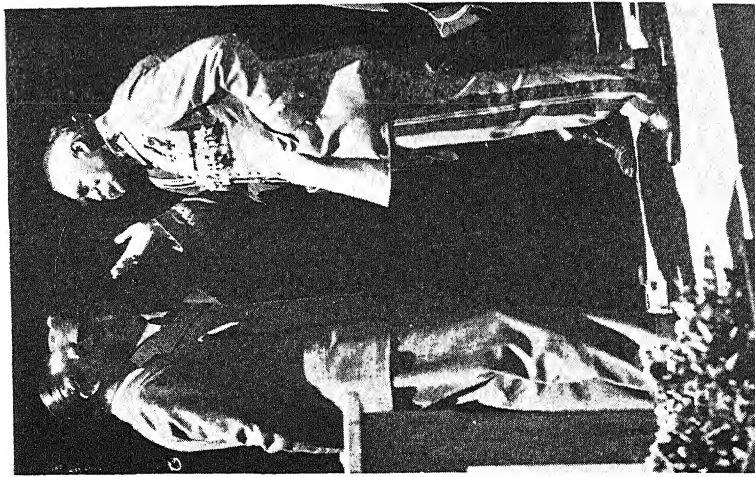
PILSUDSKI AT GDYNIA, POLAND'S NEW PORT, THE MIRACLE CITY ON THE BALTIC.



A PARTY AT THE BELVEDERE. MME. PILSUDSKA SEATED; THE DAUGHTERS
ON EITHER SIDE OF THE MARSHAL. *Pikiel*



THE TWO MARSHALS—FOCH AND PILSUDSKI—AT
WARSAW ON THE THIRD OF MAY, 1923.



PILSUDSKI WITH GRANDI, THE ITALIAN FOR-
EIGN MINISTER, AT DRUSKENIKI IN 1930.

financial situation was alarming, where inflation with all its evils was followed by the fall of the *zloty*. From the quiet of Sulejowek Pilsudski looked on at the struggle of parties and the increasing disorder, and waited. He thought this could not be prolonged without danger to Poland. The government was powerless, yet old customs and traditions and laws would not permit the formation of a stronger government.

"We must have patience," Pilsudski would say to his friends, who urged him to abolish Parliament and the Constitution, "it is not yet time to interfere. Orders and proclamations do not change morals and customs, it is bitter experience."

If he made a mistake, if he waited too long, it was because he judged men higher and better than they actually were. During that period of retirement he was making an educational experiment, giving the people the opportunity to decide their own fate. But he saw regretfully that the Poles were not yet ready for the freedom given them. As long as the foundations of his work were undisturbed, he would not interfere. But when Poland stood on the edge of the abyss, he boldly entered the scene, took on himself the responsibility for the country's destiny, and declared war on governmental disorders. In all the history of Poland there was no precedent for such an act; there had been internal struggles before, but the victorious party had never been able to take advantage of its superiority.

The crisis was imminent. The treasury was almost empty. The shortage of private capital was very great. There was serious unemployment. The *zloty* continued to fall. Disastrous business arrangements in government contracts and concessions came to light—a timber concession to a British firm, a linen concession to a French company; whatever the details Poland was the loser, and at home and abroad her prestige suffered.

"I don't want to use force," Pilsudski said on one occasion, "but I warn the Sejm and Senate how much the people hate them."

In November of 1925 he sent to President Wojciechowski a clear statement of his views on the situation, a protest against the government's acts. It brought no results. Many persons felt that something radical must be done. By spring the *zloty* had lost nearly half its value. Parliament was discredited. The crisis of confidence threatened to affect not only the finances, but even Poland's prospects as an independent nation. Pilsudski knew that foreigners were counting on the Poles' inability to work together. To him the situation seemed to ask for independent action.

In February army men felt some change in the air. They suspected graft in the Ministry of War. This they reported to the Marshal, protesting that such a state of affairs should not be allowed to go on. He listened to their story, then nodded his head and answered slowly, "Na—na—that will be finished soon." But what he would do he confided to no one.

Things came to a head when he saw the army threatened. One party proposed to cut the army budget, but would not cut also the wages of railroad men. Another party introduced a bill that would put the army under the immediate control of Parliament, making the commander-in-chief a political appointee; that could only mean that the army which had been built up under Pilsudski's direction would become a political plaything and lose its efficiency. In the latest Cabinet, the Minister of War was a special enemy of his; the result would be that all his friends would be dismissed from high command. In both army and Parliament his followers and his opponents formed two camps.

Night after night at Sulejowek his adjutant heard him walking up and down, up and down, the whole night through. He was thinking things out—alone, as was his

custom. Should he seize the rudder of the Polish ship before it struck on the rocks? Should he take it by force? Was now the time to interfere?

The Warsaw papers were carrying on a press war, with charges and counter-charges. In and out of the army men were saying that something should be done, and that immediately. There was talk of a dictator in Poland—a popular measure just then in several European countries, putting all the power and all the responsibility on one man who should think for the nation. The capital was full of rumors.

Ten army officers went back and forth from Warsaw to Sulejowek, reporting to Pilsudski all that went on. Seven hundred officers were organized, ready to do whatever the Marshal said: their scheme was to turn the Cabinet out, arranging it all in secret and acting very suddenly. He did not want to plot in secret: whatever he did would be done in the open.

The day after Witos became premier again in May, a Warsaw paper printed an article by Pilsudski in which this paragraph occurred:

“I for one see the crisis as not yet terminated. I think it is necessary to take up anew the fight against evil which is corroding the state, against parties who act without restraint, on the lookout for personal profits, apparently forgetting completely the interests of the state.”

It was an attack on the whole Cabinet. That issue was promptly suppressed by the government, but not before Pilsudski had made his point. A rival paper announced that he would be prosecuted for it.

People began to show openly their dislike for the Witos government. Pilsudski enthusiasts marched through the streets, proclaiming him as the only possible saviour of the country. Posters with the words “We believe in Pilsudski!” appeared on the walls. Orchestras in the coffee-houses were told to play the Legions’ march. The city was seething with excitement.

On the evening of the eleventh, a few hundred radical university students went out to Sulejowek to hold a demonstration against Pilsudski. Word of this was telephoned to an army post near by, where some cavalry regiments had been having manouvers. There was a sudden alarm by the walls of the park, voices became loud; through the stillness of the night sounded the galloping of horses; then the sharp sound of shots—confusion—quiet again.

A group of officers entered Pilsudski's workroom. The colonel said that three squadrons of the regiment had put down a threatened attempt on the Marshal's life, and asked for further orders. He stood before them, his head a little forward, his hands in the pockets of his gray coat.

Should he thank them and send them back to their camp? Or should he take up this fight? He was nearly sixty. Could he say to these men, to the Polish people, that he wanted to avoid this last war, the most dreadful of all? A civil war, a war for power, Poles against Poles, would be tragic, but it was necessary to choose the lesser of two evils: to destroy the law of the country temporarily, or to let the state, still under construction, be divided. At last he raised his head. They were waiting, ambassadors of the people, asking of him nothing, but absolutely trusting him.

"I thank you, gentlemen. You wish to hear my orders. I, the first Marshal of Poland, will ride to Warsaw at your head and lay my demands before the government. I rely on you."

It was a hard decision for him to make. Again a night when he must decide the fate of Poland, taking on his shoulders all the responsibility. Thirty and more years of fighting had hardened him to the idea of war, but he could not think of civil war without a deep shudder. Again battle and the shedding of blood——

A regiment of infantry, east of Warsaw, received a command to march to Sulejowek to protect the Marshal.

In one hour they were on the way, but without their colonel, who was kept prisoner by several young officers. Between the villa and the capital they met the cavalry and Pilsudski, and went on together rejoicing.

The shots fired at Sulejowek were understood in Warsaw. A students' demonstration need not be taken seriously, but the march of soldiers to the capital was a political fact. The authority of the government was involved. The Cabinet met without intermission. The peasant premier was not one to surrender without a fight. He ordered the Warsaw garrison alarmed, the Vistula bridges guarded with machine guns and cannon. He issued a proclamation to the people, declaring that he would mobilize enough loyal troops so that Pilsudski would not attack the city. By telephone and telegraph he notified the provinces, ordering regiments to Warsaw.

Still, it looked hopeless for the government. He decided to parley. He sent President Wojciechowski to the Poniatowski bridge to talk with Pilsudski, to demand that he lay down his arms and withdraw his troops—for this was mutiny. The President left his motor and with slow, heavy steps went along the bridge. He felt the responsibility of the hour and hoped their old friendship would avail to prevent civil war.

The Marshal came from the other side of the Vistula. He wore a gray military coat, for the night march had been cold. In the first warm sunshine of spring he shivered. For years the two men had worked together, now for the first time they met as opponents.

The President was not only the old companion of Pilsudski, he was also the head of the Polish state; and now he must deal with a rebellious Marshal. He felt responsible to the officers and soldiers, some of them lined up behind him, who had answered the call of the government to defend the capital.

"Pan Marshal, I demand of you the immediate laying down of your arms."

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"Pan Marshal, I demand of you the immediate laying down of your arms."

Perhaps in his heart Pilsudski was pleased at that firmness, for many men would have drawn back before a threat from the first Marshal of Poland. But if he yielded, Witos would think he had won the victory.

"I can not think of that. Dismiss the Witos Cabinet. Then we can talk."

Perhaps in his heart Wojciechowski was pleased at this firmness, for it was the old Pilsudski speaking, with the iron will and energy that had more than once saved Poland.

Neither side would give way.

"Pan Marshal, have you thought of the consequences your decision must bring?"

All his life Pilsudski had accepted the consequences of his acts.

"Yes."

"So we separate," said the President sadly and held out his hand to his old friend.

The Marshal took it in greeting, touched his cap, turned and went back to his officers and soldiers at the end of the bridge.

Almost at once Pilsudski's attack began. The government troops, drawn up hurriedly near the bridge approaches, could not long withstand the fury of storming regiments and were pushed back into the city. Soon the Marshal held the north half of Warsaw. The Radziwill palace, the seat of the Cabinet, was surrounded by his troops, but when they entered they found only a few anxious servants. The Cabinet had fled to the Belvedere, the house where Pilsudski had lived as Chief of State.

The government forces were centered there and along the wide avenue running from the palace to the heart of the city. From prisoners Pilsudski learned that large reinforcements were expected early the next day for a counter-attack: he must then attack that night. But first a parley. He sent a man by motorcycle out to the Belvedere where the Cabinet was meeting in all-night session.

He offered, if they resigned, to put himself unconditionally under the President's orders. 255

Some members wanted to accept his terms. The Minister of War argued against that, saying they would be ready the next day and would quickly force Pilsudski and his men out of the city; if they agreed now, he might take similar action against any future Cabinet that did not please him. Plainly compromise would not avail. Their answer was a refusal, as long as the Marshal threatened the constitutional power of the government with an armed force.

The struggle had to go on. From one block of buildings to the next sharp fighting now ran up the streets; machine guns; barricades and improvised trenches. Slowly, slowly the government troops were pushed back, back, toward the Belvedere. More soldiers came to Warsaw, reinforcing both sides. The Marshal's men found it difficult to get in touch with their friends, for telegraph and telephone were in the hands of the government. They gave various excuses, such as that the Communists were creating a disturbance, and some regiments reached the capital without knowing why they were summoned. Indeed the Cabinet ordered some troops with the magic words, "The Marshal wishes you here!" and when they were sent to defend the Belvedere, they obeyed, thinking they were defending Pilsudski. When they learned the facts they went over to his side with banners flying.

By 1926 the Polish army was well disciplined and unusually obedient. Both sides obeyed the orders of their officers enthusiastically. The soldiers were not on one side or the other politically, they were simply obeying. The civilian population had no share in the fighting from first to last. Strange as it may seem, almost normal life went on in many parts of Warsaw those three days; cooks went to market, street cars and suburban trains ran, if somewhat irregularly, private cars did not entirely disappear from the scene.

But there was little sleep at night for Warsaw, every one was out on the streets. Most of the people were on Pilsudski's side and often there were shouts, "Viva Pilsudski! Viva Pan Marshal!" They were not frightened, but very curious to see trenches and barricades and actual fighting. More than once a wounded officer fell into the arms of civilians, so close were the crowds. They disobeyed the orders of police and soldiers, came out from their houses, crossed the street when they were warned not to—and so many were killed; mostly boys.

At the Place of the Three Crosses two workmen were watching some soldiers fire machine guns at the entrance to the avenue leading out to the Belvedere.

"Go inside that house. It is dangerous here."

"No, we want to stay. We must see."

The fire slackened and one man said, "It's over for a bit. I'm going across. They'll not shoot now." He went across in safety and turned to call back, "Come on over. There's no danger." His comrade started and was badly wounded.

One of Pilsudski's officers at the railroad station was asked to delay a train that was bringing a regiment of government troops. It was after midnight and he had little time. He called together some street boys and said, "If you love the Marshal, help me." He bundled them into a motor truck, they raced out some miles from the city, woke up a watchman and compelled him to show them how to take up a section of the track. Then they telephoned a warning to the next station, to avoid any accident; for after all they were Polish soldiers.

The third day saw the hardest fighting of all. The Marshal was anxious to end it quickly, so bayonets and cannon were utilized. The Belvedere was fired on, with the idea that the older men there were more responsible for the situation than the young men from the Officers' School near by who were out in the street, behind barricades of paving stones. One shot fell in the courtyard,

one hit a tree, two struck the palace. President and premier had fled when the Marshal's men entered the building. They could only take prisoner the Minister of War.

The government party wanted to fight to the last and carry the war into the provinces. To their surprise whole regiments refused to take up arms against their beloved Marshal. Workers proclaimed a general strike. At Poznan the railroad men tore up the rails to prevent a train's going with loyal troops. The Cabinet saw that their game was lost. Wojciechowski resigned and Witos fled. Thus Pilsudski returned to power, helped by the army he had created.

Between seven and eight thousand men were engaged in that three days' fighting, three or four regiments on both sides. People could scarcely believe that there were so few casualties (about a thousand, counting those slightly injured), for street fighting is famous for its casualties. Pilsudski's force was smaller and not so well equipped, but his popularity and the intelligence of his officers won the day.

All Poland and many friends of Poland abroad watched breathlessly to see what Pilsudski would do. In a *coup d'etat* the rebel normally declares himself king or dictator. Not so in this case. The Marshal had taken this step not for himself, but for Poland. Everything must go on legally, once this illegal action which he had felt absolutely necessary was finished. According to the Constitution, the Marshal of the Sejm was acting president until a new one could be chosen.

At the end of May Pilsudski was elected president, with two hundred and ninety-two votes against a hundred and ninety-three for the Conservative candidate. That pleased him as it legalized his *coup d'etat*. He thought it a good sign for Poland that the vote was not unanimous this time, it showed there were fewer hypocrites. He did not want an office that gave him no power, and a second time he refused the presidency. His friend,

258 Ignacy Moscicki (Moes-zee'skee), a chemist of international reputation who had once made bombs for the conspirators, who had not been in political life, was then elected president. Pilsudski was again named Minister of War.

This was more than a victory of one man over parties. It was the climax of a rebellious habit, inherited from the eighteenth century and resurrected with the reborn state. It was the climax of a rebellious habit, inherited from the wielded not by individuals but by political groups whose interests outweighed the community's welfare.

Many persons were surprised that there were no reprisals after such a contest. Pilsudski was not vindictive. He said repeatedly, "Do not persecute my enemies. Those who went against me openly I respect, because they followed their knightly honor. Those who went with me understood what Poland wants." Two officers who had been on the opposite side were given important posts. If men were able and their work necessary for Poland, they must not be excluded.

Soldiers who had been fighting against each other, sometimes companies from the same regiment, went back to their barracks and were at once good friends. Officers meeting at the Ministry of War or the General Staff were all friendly. None of Pilsudski's opponents was punished.

"Forget that it had to happen," the Marshal ordered. "Do not talk about it. We must remember it only as a terrible fight between loving brothers. But let us forget it and all work for Poland."

But he suffered—far more than any one knew. His hair turned white. His face took on a sadness that never left it. He lost his gayety and his keen sence of humor. He began to be an old man, with stooped shoulders. His closest friends noticed a great change in him after that May of 1926. Once he said to one of them, "The gentleman from the Polish manor house, with all the old traditions, as my mother brought me up—is dead."

He was distressed over the deaths that were an inevitable accompaniment of the *coup d'etat*. They could have been avoided, but for the blindness of party struggle. He grieved especially for the young men who had lost their lives. "For the sins of Poland," he said sadly as he watched some funeral processions.

He was by nature a silent man and never announced beforehand what he would do. Some people thought, looking back at those May days, that if he had only said frankly what he wanted, the people who already hated the Sejm and were distinctly unfriendly to the Witos Cabinet, would have rallied to his side by thousands, soldiers and civilians alike; then the government would have seen its powerlessness and the change could have been carried out without any fighting at all. But Pilsudski must be taken as he was, not as he might have been.

For the first time in centuries, a Polish internal struggle had ended with a victory that raised the government to unprecedented heights. For the first time in centuries disorders in the state had been overcome, defeated by the native strength of Poland. The reaction abroad was particularly striking, for Polish securities went up sharply on various Stock Exchanges. The *coup d'etat* had raised the prestige of Poland in the outside world.

"After a long fight with myself," Pilsudski said to a group of newspaper men, "I forced myself to do this—by force. I accept all its consequences. All my life I have fought for virtue, honor, man's inner strength, not for my own interests. There can't be in the state too much injustice among those who by their labor serve the others. There can't be too much lawlessness if the state does not wish to perish."

He wanted no office for himself. It was better that he stay in the background, tutoring Poland, teaching her obedience and discipline, carrying out his plans to make the nation great. He did not want to be her dictator.

"When I think of Poland's history," he replied to the questions of a French journalist about dictatorship, "I see you can't rule this country very long with a whip. I don't like this whip. I am not for a dictatorship in Poland. But we must change the Constitution and give more power to the president, so that he can make decisions on important national questions quickly and alone."

He inaugurated what is called "the Pilsudski regime", not by building up his own political party, but by forming a Government *Bloc* in the Sejm, made up of men from many former parties who now pledged themselves to support the government. The members of the BBWR, as it was known in Poland, the initials of the Polish words meaning "Non-Partisan Bloc for Active Support of the Government," disagreed on many questions, but agreed on this one point—that the country needed a strong government, supported by a strong group in Parliament. At each election this new group won more seats until in 1930 it had a majority—not an overwhelming one, but a satisfactory working majority, two hundred and forty-seven votes out of four hundred and forty-four. In the BBWR Pilsudski joined all groups in a common effort to work out a constructive program for Poland.

Since 1926 Cabinets have come and gone, but they were changes within the BBWR, not from one party to another. Its members were men whom Pilsudski trusted, many of them men he had trained, who couldn't be bribed, who shouldered responsibility and worked devotedly for the interests of the state. He often used army men for special posts, till "the colonels" came to be recognized as important members of ministries and Cabinets and committees; not political soldiers so much as soldierly politicians. The Marshal was skillful in choosing people for directors, practical men who brought to the service of the state their talents as professors or chemists or archeologists; the administration of a government, he used to say, demands technicians. He had an almost infallible intui-

tion for putting the right man in the right place. He often shifted men from one ministry to another, which Warsaw called "a change of sentinels."

Once he had placed them, he was a hard taskmaster and got the most out of them. It was his habit to pile extra work on a man and then demand results.

"I am looking for a man," he would say, "and I regard you as above the average. Are you a pike? I throw you into the pond where there are some carp. After a time I come back. If I find my pike alone, having eaten the carp, my judgment was right—you were a pike. But if I find the carp all alive and my pike with wounds on his body. I say sadly, 'Oh, I was mistaken—you're not a pike.'"

Hearing this and receiving an order from the Marshal, the man would work twice as long and three times as hard as he had thought was possible, hoping to prove that he was a pike. He would double his abilities and then say to himself, "I shall be happy if he is satisfied—if he takes half of one percent of my small thoughts." But Pilsudski was never satisfied.

The Marshal held the power in his hands, but with that one exception in 1926 he was scrupulously careful to exercise his power under constitutional forms. Once the President asked him to name a new premier. He refused, saying that he was only Minister of War and could not take the responsibilities of the President. Thus he governed Poland standing in the shadow, not a slave-driver with a whip, but rather a tutor directing and suggesting, exerting unceasing influence on the people. He knew his countrymen well and thought that in governing them the right atmosphere was much more important than arguments.

His relations with the Sejm gradually improved. As soon as he was master of the situation in May, 1926, he addressed the members and frankly told them his opinion of them. He did not mince words, he did not flatter them.

262 he shamed them. It was the first time in history that the head of a state spoke such words to a Parliament. Because of the *coup d'etat* his enemies were still opposed to him, but with each election they lost and he gained. He continued the fight against corruption and sternly insisted that the men involved in foreign concessions should be punished.

The opposition made a last desperate attempt against him in 1930 when some leaders announced a great assembly at Krakow of members of all parties fighting the Marshal; they planned to march on Warsaw, seize the government, and carry out a *coup d'etat* of their own. The plan failed, for instead of many thousands, few people went to Krakow. Taking advantage of a parliamentary recess when members of the Sejm were not immune, the leaders were arrested and imprisoned at Brzesc, and later tried and sentenced. Pilsudski insisted that these cases must be pushed through, that the people must see that disorders could be mastered and that misdeeds would be punished.

Men were often astonished at the violence of his attacks on Parliament, at the strong words he used in describing faults in public life. On occasions there would come an outburst of Pilsudskian anger, followed by hard, bitter words lashing the members of the Sejm. He compared them to a locomotive drawing a pin, to a worm that he could crush under his thumb. Yet in spite of frequent urging, he abolished neither the Parliament nor the Constitution.

Inwardly he was a man of the greatest delicacy and this was emphasized by his good breeding. "How can he say such things?" people would ask, shocked at his expressions. And he would reply, "There are wounds in the Polish character—I don't want them to heal over with a thin membrane while there's infection underneath. I want to tear away that membrane, to shock the Polish brain with coarse words, so that nothing shall cover

over the wounds made by the three Partitioning Powers in the Polish brain and heart and soul." 263

He realized that the devastation in Polish thought, a result of long political enslavement, was so great that no ordinary means of remaking and educating the character of the people would be sufficient. At times he must use the whip. Sometimes over the shoulder of the Sejm he was addressing the man in the street, the peasant in some little village. He was a great educator of the masses and knew how to reach them. They understood such plain speaking. They grasped his parables, striking in their simplicity—for example, in his campaign to convince men of the need of changing the Constitution and separating more sharply the powers of Sejm, Cabinet and President and their methods of work, he told of one man going for a walk; then of a group of fourteen starting out; then of four hundred and forty-four; of the necessary difference in plans, of their meeting wagons and motors. It was a comparison that the simplest peasant could appreciate and remember.

After 1930 Pilsudski's life had no outstanding, dramatic events. He kept his old post as Minister of War, and twice he served also as premier for a few months. He seldom went to Cabinet meetings unless some subject in which he was greatly interested was to be discussed. He went in person to the Sejm a total of three or four times; he spoke only once. He was absorbed in building up the Polish army, his creation, his great pride. He started military industries to make Poland independent of foreign countries. He knew personally all the generals, all the colonels, many of the majors and captains—not possible in a government where the Minister of War is a civilian instead of a professional soldier. He knew every detail of the administration of the army and was devoted to "the boys"—and they to him.

There was one other ministry with which he kept closely in touch—the Foreign Office. He insisted it should

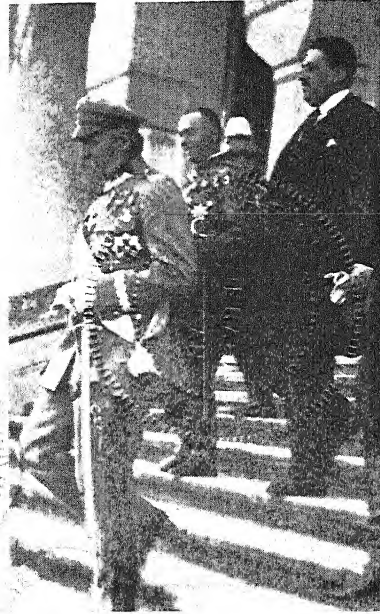
have a settled policy, not at the mercy of changes due to party struggles, not shifting with every new Cabinet. The music of Chopin and Paderewski, the poetry of Mickiewicz, Matejko's painting, the Nobel prizes in literature won by Reymont and Sienkiewicz had kept Poland's name to the fore in foreign lands; but Pilsudski was ambitious for her to be once more a Great Power, to make for herself a place in international affairs worthy of her past, worthy of a people that had kept its nationality in spite of a century's oppression and persecution.

Her place in the sun had to be won gradually, at Geneva and in the world at large. Today Poland is no longer a "poor relation" in the international family, who can be ignored in important matters. She is an independent state, conscious of her place in the world, attracting more and more the attention of foreign countries. All the Great Powers are now represented at Warsaw not by ministers, but by ambassadors. She has made alliances and treaties to further her security and the cause of peace in Europe. She has gained a seat in the Council of the League of Nations. Her growing prestige is due to Pilsudski.

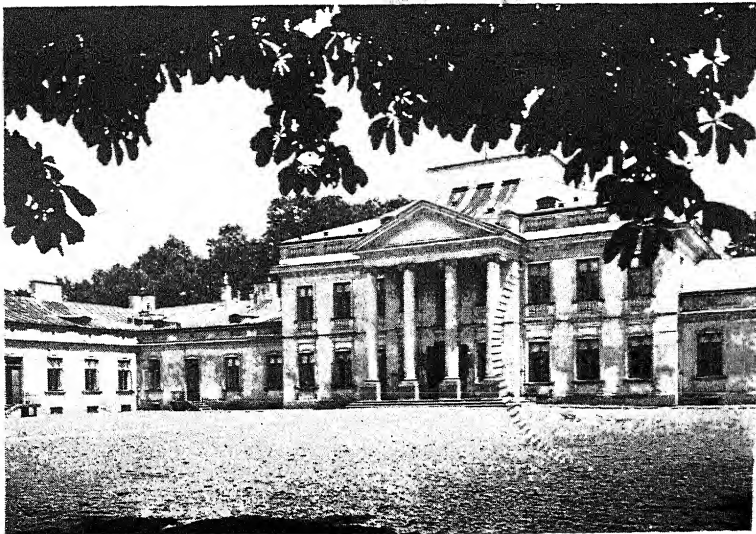
He went himself to Paris to make an alliance with France, Poland's traditional friend for centuries. Another with Roumania, her neighbor on the south. An arbitration treaty with Austria. After some initial difficulties friendly relations were established with Czecho-Slovakia. And with Poland's two greatest enemies, Russia and Germany, pacts of non-aggression were signed, each country pledging herself, for a term of years, not to invade the territory of her neighbor. Another statesman might have made such a pact with Germany or with Russia; it was a stroke of genius to make it with both. What other statesman could have made the pact with Germany without automatically and abruptly cancelling the alliance with France? It was for these two treaties, which promise to keep the peace in central Europe for the next few



A SNAPSHOT OF PILSUDSKI IN 1932,
TAKEN AT BUCAREST.



THE OFFICIAL GUEST OF ROUMANIA.



THE BELVEDERE, THE PALACE IN WARSAW, WHERE PILSUDSKI LIVED AS
CHIEF OF STATE AND MINISTER OF WAR.

Poddebski



THE POLISH CABINET AT THE ZAMEK IN 1930. PILSUDSKI, MINISTER OF WAR, IS ON THE RIGHT OF PRESIDENT MOSCICKI. *Swiatowid*



A THOUSAND POLES FROM AMERICA VISIT PILSUDSKI TO PRESENT HIM WITH A SWORD. *International Newsreel*

years at least, at points which had long been recognized as "danger spots", that the name of Jozef Pilsudski was proposed to the Nobel Prize Committee as a suitable recipient for the peace prize, for he had successfully carried through a constructive plan, important for the peace of the world. Did this mark the beginning of a new era in the history of Europe?

His plan for a federation of all the states bordering on Soviet Russia proved to be far ahead of the times. It was always his policy to win and hold the friendship of Poland's neighbors. Once a Latvian Mission went to Warsaw and after conferences at the Foreign Office talked with Pilsudski. The Latvians were charmed by his manner and when wine was served and he proposed a toast to Latvia's success, they asked in astonishment, "But what can Latvia do for Poland in return for so much?" They were even more astonished at his reply, "You will have a strong Latvia." To the Marshal an independent Poland meant also independent Baltic states.

He was grieved at Lithuania's attitude, at her refusal to arbitrate the questions between them, though Poland promised to abide by the decision of an international committee that should hear the case. From Druskieniki he could look across the river that serves as the boundary, into Lithuania; the two peoples had had a common history for more than five centuries, but had no diplomatic relations, no train service, no postal service; instead there were barriers due to jealousy and fear. It was a latent state of war, without actual fighting. Collaboration between them seemed impossible.

Hoping to remedy this situation, Pilsudski went to Geneva when the League of Nations committee was to discuss the long-standing trouble between Poland and Lithuania. He said to the chairman, "I don't believe the League committee can settle the matter quickly. You are all civilians and civilians like to talk."

During the session he electrified the assembly by crossing the room and saying directly to the Lithuanian Foreign Minister, "Is it peace or war?"

The man mumbled something vague.

"If it is war, I shall settle the matter. If it is peace, my Minister of Foreign Affairs will settle it."

"It is peace."

"Then I am ready to go," announced Pilsudski and returned to his seat.

Some hours later, when he was about to leave Geneva, the chairman of the League committee said to him, "Well, haven't we quickly settled the matter, although we are civilians?"

"Do you know why?" he rejoined. "Because a soldier helped."

It was peace then, and not war with Lithuania. But even the League could not smoothe away all the difficulties. Each year Pilsudski hoped that his efforts at friendship would be met half-way and cordial relations established with this neighbor on the north. This was the one important piece of business he left unfinished.

It was always Pilsudski's policy to conciliate rather than to antagonize. He knew that the minorities in Poland created many vexing problems. He urged that the nation's strength must lie not in a crushing uniformity, but in unity in difference; in individual groups who would honor and support a common state. He had the support of the Jews because he fought anti-Sem̄itism. Though the Ukrainians had not aided the Kiev expedition, though they fomented disorders in southeast Poland, he tried to enlist the best and most educated men among them to collaborate with the government. With all the minorities—for there are more than these two in Poland—he favored a liberal policy, giving them freedom in their cultural activities so that they might become good citizens of Poland.

While he ostensibly limited his activities to the Ministry of War and the Foreign Office, his quiet, unceasing work to make strong the new Polish state was felt in every department. It was due to him that the executive powers were strengthened, that the treasury business was ordered and every government office put on the budget system, that inflation was stamped out and the *zloty* stabilized and in spite of the world depression was kept stable. Poland is not rich, but her finances are solid. A country without reserves, she has survived the economic crisis. It was Pilsudski whose final word secured for Poland the stabilization loan from the English and American bankers. A soldier, he seemed far from economics; but his genius was all-embracing.

As soon as the BBWR had a majority in Parliament, he withdrew more and more from direct management of affairs, turning the work and the responsibility over to others. It was possible then to take up the reform of the Constitution. That of 1921 had failed to pass the test of life. Its deficiencies, its faults prevented normal development of the state in the difficult conditions of post-war years. It was imperative to change it, limiting the powers of Parliament and increasing those of the executive. But this could be undertaken only when a majority of the people saw that it was necessary.

Pilsudski was often urged to change the Constitution by force or by decree. He refused, saying that the people could express their wish by electing members of Parliament pledged to change the Constitution along certain lines. The Sejm committee, with many lawyers helping, drafted a new Constitution which Parliament discussed, amended somewhat, and proclaimed in April, 1935. Pilsudski signed it, with trembling hand, less than a month before his death.

XV.

THE MAN AT THE BELVEDERE.

To many Poles, to foreigners who knew him only from photographs, Pilsudski was a soldier, stern and forbidding. It is with amazement that they learn from his close friends how one-sided and false a conception they had formed of him.

He hated to be photographed and though he stood up without grumbling to be snapped with distinguished visitors, unconsciously his face set in stern, hard lines at the very sight of cameras. There are hundreds of pictures of him in existence, but only a few where he is half smiling.

The world knew him only as a soldier, always in the gray uniform of the Legions. His achievements as the builder of Poland were little recognized outside the country. With so much emphasis on his military life, which totaled less than four years out of sixty-seven, the world never knew him as a lover of peace, did not realize that the non-aggression pacts with Russia and Germany were his plan, made long before and persistently cherished until a change of circumstances made it possible to carry them through to a happy conclusion.

He was also a writer of no mean talent. He was editor and constant contributor to P. P. S. publications, writing with an easy, informal style that even in translation charms and holds the reader. During his three years of retirement he supported his family by his pen. Had he given all his time and thought to writing, he might have made a great reputation.

He was a good actor and possibly the stage lost a brilliant performer when he devoted himself to the P. P. S. and *Bojowka* and the Legions. He was acting in the Citadel when he feigned madness. He was acting at the hospital in St. Petersburg, where after his escape the doctors discussed his case and some of them still declared that he was insane.

"Look away," he once said to a young friend, "for a few seconds. Then turn back—I shall be quite innocent. You will see what a good actor I am."

When she looked at him again, she could hardly believe it was the same man. His face was completely changed, the eyes especially—the personification of innocence.

He had unquestionably gifts as an orator, but little opportunity to develop them. Sometimes he repeated a word, using it like a *motif* in music. Often he made a striking combination of words having the same sound, words not combined by Poles, so that it was especially impressive. He was never interested in the making of fine phrases, but spoke right to the point, grasping the essence of things. He thought faster than he could pronounce the words; the shorthand report of a speech showed here a subject omitted, there a verb; but the music of his voice carried the listeners along so that they were never conscious of omissions.

He was an excellent lecturer, speaking slowly, clearly, forcibly. Officers who heard his military lectures say he was their best instructor, he made everything so clear; but it was taxing to listen, for every sentence was important; they had to concentrate without a moment of relaxed attention.

He spoke French, German, Russian, in addition to Polish. He understood English, but did not speak it often. He knew the dialects of White Russia and the Ukraine. Without having finished at the university, he had an amazing fund of general information.

One of his friends, appointed as minister to one of the smaller countries in Europe, went to the Belvedere to say goodbye. Pilsudski talked to him about his new post—about the people, their history, the climate there, various questions that would come up. After he had been there three months the man found that the Marshal had been exactly correct in all his amazing detail.

His pictures show the tightly compressed lips of the silent man. With friends he could be the most charming conversationalist, telling some incident from his own life, illustrating some point with an amusing anecdote, narrating one of his many adventures, making it all fascinating. He talked extremely well, on the greatest variety of topics. When he did not wish to discuss political affairs, he would surprise visitors by talking for a full hour about his daughters.

He “improvised” in poetry for them. One of his adjutants accompanied him to a conference, a strenuous two hours filled with controversy. When it was over, he went into the next room where his wife and daughters were waiting. He sat down and closed his eyes. The improvisation began—poetry, strikingly beautiful, simple enough for children to grasp—they were then seven and five. It was about the stars, about Cinderella, about Poland, and a dozen other topics. The adjutant listened for an hour, longing to write it down.

He was known as a silent man. General Weygand summed it up when he said that Pilsudski listened while they all talked, as if he drew inspiration from himself. His features showed something of that spiritual struggle, the outward calm which often marks the man who lives in upon himself. To a certain extent that was all true, a secretary says, but he liked to talk. If he went to bed at one o'clock he would talk to the secretary for an hour, two hours, three hours, night after night; for he slept very little—perhaps four hours, never more than six. There was no theme he did not discuss, and on every theme he talked well.

People close to him were not afraid of him, not in awe of him, but felt a very great respect. He did not live in that grim silence that forbids a laugh or a joke. Clever cartoons of himself afforded him many a hearty laugh—in one he was hunting through the dictionary for more swear words to use about the Sejm; in another he stepped through a great frame labeled Constitution, which had grown too small for him; while in a third he was throwing Cabinet members into the water to see if they could swim. There was another favorite, labeled "Pilsudski and his Cabinet," where he sat before a screen whose panels were all mirrors reflecting his own image.

He was on occasion a great tease. Here is one instance: On one eleventh of November a review of the army was held and regiment after regiment marched before the Marshal. One of the most spectacular events was the passing of the artillery, with the horses at full gallop. A few days later there was an official reception, where all the Diplomatic Corps were present. An American banker who had witnessed the review paid his respects to the Marshal and congratulated him on the splendid appearance of the troops.

When Pilsudski saw that the diplomats standing near were craning their necks to hear what was being said, he leaned forward and whispered to the banker—an acknowledgement of the compliment and certain small facts about the army, none of them of the slightest importance. Thinking that this must be a confidential conversation, the ambassadors drew back respectfully and the Marshal continued to whisper, which enormously excited their curiosity. He was very much amused and his eyes twinkled like a mischievous boy's. When the banker withdrew and was immediately surrounded by the Diplomatic Corps, he distinctly heard Pilsudski chuckling.

An American once called at the Belvedere, accompanied by his sixteen-year-old son. As they talked the Marshal took up the inevitable cigarette. The boy flashed out

272 a lighter which he had just purchased, to extend that little courtesy to his host. As frequently happens, the lighter would not light.

"Gosh!" the discomfited boy burst out in English, greatly to the amusement of the Marshal, "wouldn't you know the thing wouldn't go in a moment like this?"

There was about Pilsudski some constant magnetism of greatness, that made people instinctively rise when he entered the room. At Druskieniki tourists stood up involuntarily when he passed up the road from his cottage to the bathhouse, or strolled through the park or in the forest. He would have preferred that they should not do that, for he never wanted attention.

Once at Poznan, the hotbed of opposition to him politically, a gala performance at the opera was announced in his honor. His enemies did not dare plan a demonstration against him, but decided that they would do nothing to show him honor; they would remain seated when he entered his box—slight enough in itself, but a significant act. He reached the city late in the afternoon and was greeted at the station by thousands of people, cheering him, madly enthusiastic. His enemies were chagrined and surprised, but explained it by saying, "This is only the *hoi polloi*. In the evening the audience will be the intelligentsia, the men who count in Poznan. We will see." But at the opera the same scene was repeated. He entered the box and instinctively the great audience rose to its feet and cheered and cheered—even men and women who had declared they would not.

One of Pilsudski's close friends went with his wife and little son, the Marshal's godchild, to the Belvedere. They stayed for perhaps an hour. Sometimes the intensity of his thought, developing his ideas, brooding over the future, made it difficult for him to build with words. At such moments friends felt the touch of genius in him—the touch of God, one of them called it. His eyes, looking far away, warned all those present to silence.

It was so during this call. The visitors could not speak, 273 they could not move; they felt Greatness in the room and trembled. Magical was the influence of this deep impression.

Wrote the Russian novelist, Dymitr Merejowski, after a talk with Pilsudski in 1921:

When he entered the room that "quiet wind" spoken of in the Book of Kings, wafted about me and I felt at once that this was he, the Hero, "the essence of being," as Nietzsche said of Napoleon. I recognized that vigorous figure of the soldier and the workman, that worn face, almost old but immortally young; that steep, overhanging, convex brow, deep plowed with crossing furrows, like hard stone marked by the sculptor's chisel; those tightly-compressed lips of the great silent one, and under the obstinately crisped, bristling, fair eyebrows those strangely brilliant eyes, now misty, now transparent, with their inexpressible glance, deep-seeing, of second sight. I knew that form would be sculptured more enduringly than in bronze by the chisel of the great sculptor, History.

In the inner circle he was affable and gay and witty, always pleasant, always merry; not stern and relentless, but very approachable. He had graceful, elegant movements and danced well. His face was lighted up by the most radiant smile, not entirely hidden by the long, drooping moustaches. He was well bred, no man in public life more so. He had that gift called "social poise" and no one could complain of his lack of tact—this was especially true at the beginning of his career; later he lost something of his trusting, affable attitude under the strain of his experiences; he sometimes was severe in his manner, seeing that appeals to good will did not always succeed and that vices must be branded with contempt and anger.

Accompanying the beauty of his smile was the piercing look of his blue, blue eyes under overhanging brows. They were strangely brilliant, with an eagle-like look that made a man feel he was looking him through and through. His deep piercing glance could be full of praise or full of accusation. It made the wrongdoer tremble. He could

274 be exceedingly stern and severe when there was need—if he had to chide a general or minister, for instance; but that he always dreaded and had to force himself to go through with it. With his aides he was like a father and would say every morning, “How are you, my child?”

Asked to give their impression of Pilsudski, close friends and people who had met him only once agreed on three points—his smile, the strangely brilliant eyes, and his charm. A colleague who for sixteen years took orders from him without ever having met him, was amazed at his friendliness and charm when the war finally brought them together. There was something electric about him, the man added.

A woman who was a burning patriot and the owner of great estates was shocked at the *coup d'état* and could not make up her mind whether to side with Pilsudski or not; could not decide till he was presented to her at a tea, and as they shook hands she was suddenly convinced that Poland was safe with him. For the rest of his life she was a devoted partisan.

An army officer's wife, an ardent National Democrat, was asked by the regiment to arrange the details of a banquet where Pilsudski was to be guest of honor. They were grateful to her for all her trouble and though they knew her politics, invited her to the banquet. She was completely won over by the Marshal's charm and from that day was as staunch a worker for the BBWR as she had once been for the Conservatives.

He had the greatest dislike for fuss and show, for all that is summed up in the word “publicity.” There was about him nothing of pose or “showing off”—rather, the greatness of simplicity. He avoided public appearances whenever he could, more and more as he grew older. He saw very few people and he was one of the most difficult men in the world for journalists to interview. When he wanted the help of the press, as in acquainting the people of Poland with his views on some subject, he would sum-

mon an editor and talk to him. The result would be a long "interview" in which the editor asked a question and the Marshal answered for three or four paragraphs; a second question and a long reply; perhaps a third—then the Marshal to the end of three columns.

The Polish journalists with whom he talked were only four, men he had known for a long time, in whom he had great confidence. When some item of news was given out at the Belvedere, it was always—to the distress of newspaper men—in the past tense: "The Marshal left Warsaw at four o'clock today for Wilno," never "will leave at four." He never made use of the press or the radio to keep his name and personality before the public, he never courted popularity but shunned it, he never played with mob psychology. Once in Lwow he agreed to go to a concert organized in his honor, on condition that a note be put in the program that there must be no demonstration when he entered. At public gatherings he always went very rapidly to his place, and left as rapidly.

"My mother taught me," he replied to a lady who asked why he did that, for it gave people no chance to see him, "to wait—to wait for the ladies, for older people—that was courtesy. And now when I must go first, when everyone waits for me, it is very embarrassing and I walk as fast as I can to get it over with."

At Geneva Lady Churchill asked that he be presented to her. She was greatly surprised to meet a gray-haired man in civilian clothes—black coat and striped trousers and gray tie.

"I couldn't imagine you would look so modest," she said, voicing the general opinion about the first Marshal of Poland.

"If you will come to Warsaw," he replied quickly with his beautiful smile, "I will show myself to you in the full splendor of my Marshal's uniform."

For official occasions he put on that uniform, with the broad blue and black ribbon of the first class *Virtuti*

276 *Militari*, but usually he wore the plain gray of the Legions; at home a coat with no insignia on sleeve or collar or shoulder. This he loved for all its wealth of association, and he found it more comfortable than any other. But he always had some civilian clothes in his wardrobe.

He was perhaps not careless about dress, but indifferent. Always some one did his shopping, purchasing his suits, his shoes and hats and handkerchiefs. Once some one in Krakow protested to his wife that his coat fitted so badly and she explained, "Yes, I know. I had to buy it readymade, you see. Ziuk isn't interested in clothes and wouldn't go to the tailor to be measured."

He was simple and modest to the last degree. He disliked having many people around him. Sometimes he had only one adjutant. His visiting cards read "Jozef Pilsudski", without any titles whatever.

In Krakow he lived with his wife in two rooms. Later when it was necessary to have a guestroom, it was furnished with only a bed, a chair and a table. They had tea and bread, or bread and tea. Luxuries were not for him; sometimes even comforts were lacking; this was not through self-denial and great will power, but rather that he was indifferent to them.

One day in London, where the P.P.S. group were always so hard up, a future president of Poland burst into the room and cried jubilantly, "I've found a shop where herring cost five farthings less!"

"Go to the devil!" Ziuk answered. "I'm thinking about Poland, not about herring."

At Druskieniki he lived in what had been the gardener's cottage. Friends offered to build him a mansion, then to add a bathroom to the house, but he said, "No, thank you, we want to live just like other people here." It was not a large house, and with two aides to be cared for the four Pilsudskis had only three rooms; for the Marshal

would not allow a little old lady who had rented a room there to be sent away. 277

From the street the Belvedere seems a large building, but there too Pilsudski lived most simply. All the central part of the palace was taken up with rooms of state—reception rooms, one for the adjutants, the great salon where distinguished visitors were received, a conference room with a long table covered with a green cloth. Beyond all these was a small corner room, opening out to the park, which was called his rest room. Upstairs was his workroom—rather a large room with a plain desk; over the bed three swords, against a lovely Polish wall hanging—one was the gift of the Poles of America, one from the First Brigade, the third marked “August 6, 1914—August 6, 1916,” was an anniversary present from the Legions to remind him of the day they left Krakow and invaded Congress Kingdom.

The family lived in one wing of the Belvedere, six small rooms with a bath and a tiny kitchen. They had one servant who was both cook and housemaid, with a woman to help when there was a reception.

“Not so elaborate a household as the average middle-class family in Warsaw,” a friend of the Pilsudskis described it.

Unassuming as he was, he had a keen sense of what was due not to Jozef Pilsudski, the individual, but to the Chief of State or Minister of War or first Marshal of Poland. Once a member of the aristocracy went to the Belvedere, not correctly dressed. Pilsudski shook hands with all the delegation except this man whom he passed by. He considered that discourteous to the Polish Chief of State; if the man had gone to call on the Russian governor, he would have put on formal morning dress.

He had a high sense of the importance of his position, was conscious of its greatness, and on occasion could be dignified, formal, severe as well as the most friendly, informal person imaginable. Once Witos, coming away

278 from a conference at the Belvedere, said, "I have just seen *le grand seigneur*."

He was an indefatigable worker, occupied from morning to night—and often from night till morning. He said to the first Cabinet, in November of 1918, that there must be a race of work—and he set the pace. He had no time for diversions or pleasures. If he traveled, it was in the interests of Poland. While he was premier he had a bedroom at the Radziwill palace and slept there five nights a week, spending only weekends at Sulejowek. The last six years of his life he had a bed at the General Inspectorate of the army and often spent days at a time in that building, without going to his home.

Always he was occupied with Poland's business, not with his own. Said a Pole who was intimately associated with him for a period of thirty years, as lawyer for the political prisoners of the P.P.S., as his host in Warsaw during the conspiracy days, as a delegate to the Paris Peace Conference, as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Poland's ambassador in three important capitals:

"His family excepted, his interests lay entirely within the sphere of public affairs connected with his country. It is a fact that, meeting him as I did so often, through so many years, we never once talked about private affairs. It was as if he did not attach to them any importance whatsoever, or as if he had no affairs of his own—only Poland's."

The adjutants were on duty for twenty-four hours at a time, then a free twenty-four hours when they tried to catch up with their sleep. He would walk up and down for a long time, gesturing with his right hand, sometimes with both hands, thinking, thinking. Often he summoned some member of the Cabinet for eleven at night or midnight, and would talk with him an hour or two. He said that he did his best thinking at night when all was quiet. Cabinet members found working with him strenu-

ous, since they had to be at their desks at nine in the morning. 279

It was hard also for his doctors. He disliked taking medicine and would talk for a half-hour, holding a tablet in his hand, and when the doctor left, would lay it down on the table and go on with his work. He was not particular about his food but ate what was put before him; if it was caviare, he ate caviare; if it was a glass of milk, he drank that. But he hated being put on a diet. Would he eat some fruit? No. But if the adjutant left on his desk a plate with a quartered apple or pear, he would unconsciously reach out his hand for a piece and eat it. Like the Allies with the frontiers of Poland, he accepted a *fait accompli*.

"At what hour will you take your drive?" a secretary would ask when the doctor ordered a daily drive.

"I'm not going."

But if the man held up the gray overcoat and said, "Please put on your coat, Pan Marshal, the horses are waiting," he would give a little grunt, leave his desk, thrust his arms into the sleeves of the overcoat and say shortly, "Let us go."

He smoked a great deal—one cigarette after another, when he was thinking intently. But less the last year or two. Many persons sent him gifts of cigarettes. It was one of the little duties of the adjutants to keep a supply on hand—by the bed, at each end of the room, on every table.

Decisions in weighty matters the Marshal took in solitude, walking around the room and talking to himself. He did not allow any one to interrupt him then. A servant or secretary would hear him from time to time, pacing to and fro, stopping, muttering a curse or bursting into laughter.

When an ambassador, returning from a long absence, would render an important report at the Belvedere, Pilsudski would listen, sometimes contradicting the man to

180 evoke a more accurate statement. Then he would say, "Have you finished? Have you said all that you had to say? All right then, now I will do my thinking."

He would go into the next room and walk up and down, sometimes for a very long period. He would put out the light, then turn it on, put it out again. At last he would return with a decision he had arrived at. If their opinions agreed, he would give his hand to the ambassador and say briefly, "All right, we are agreed." If not, he postponed the matter till he could secure more information.

Sometimes, to stop thinking over a difficult problem, he played patience, always with very small cards. If a visitor came in he would finish his game, then their talk could begin. When their business was finished, he would reach out and take up the cards before the man was out of the room.

He had a second way of resting—an unusual method. He played two games of chess at once, his opponents at either end of a long room in the Belvedere, the Marshal walking up and down, playing once against Mr. A. and then one move against Mr. B. It took so much mental energy to think out two series of moves at the same time that he declared he felt refreshed when the games were ended and could go back to his work with new zeal. He was an excellent chess player and nearly always won.

Many persons sent him sets of chessmen. One that amused him very much was carved by hand, the king a likeness of the Marshal, the queen of Madame Pilsudska, the pawns soldiers in helmets.

He was not afraid of death, but he did have one fear—money. All his life he was poor, but to him that was not important. What money he had in those early years of conspiracy was always for the P.P.S. Once he went to St. Petersburg to deliver *bibula* and collect funds from the Socialist group there. A well-to-do Pole, a helping friend of the cause, gave him a sum of money for the

party and a second contribution which was for Wiktor, for the man was shocked to see how poorly he was dressed. Pilsudski took out his book and wrote both amounts down for the P.P.S. Once when he was ill and spent some months at Druskieniki taking a "cure", he refused to draw his salary from the Ministry of War, saying that he was not doing any work for the army.

He hated selfishness and graft. Never swayed by popular clamor or by public opinion, he was direct and straightforward in all his dealings—unlike many of the old conspirators whose early training in roundabout methods remained with them after Poland regained her independence. He told people, even members of Parliament, exactly what he thought of them, sometimes sharply, sometimes brutally, always sincerely. He disliked flattery and was entirely indifferent to what men thought of him.

He had a special hatred for three qualities—greed, cowardice, stupidity. He said that men who had these could be induced to commit the most infamous deeds—the greedy for money, the stupid through a trick, the cowardly through intimidation.

For success, he used to say, three things are necessary: will, ability, and a bit of luck. The first two a man can control; the third he can't; it is a gift. He often said that he had luck—that bullets never hit him; that just when he was sure he'd go mad if he pretended longer in the Citadel, a message came from the doctor that he was to stop for a while; that he arrived from Magdeburg on the very day when the Poles had planned to begin street fighting against the Germans, and his presence saved Warsaw from being fired on. "My luck," he commented when later he heard this.

By intense and logical thought he was able to foresee the future. One of the marks of his genius was his extraordinary farsightedness. Every one of his colleagues can give some striking instance of this. In 1912 when in-

282 dependence was still a dream and few people were even discussing it, he was already thinking of the governing of Poland and said, "The railroads aren't well planned for the country as a whole." In the reborn state an entirely new scheme for the railroads proved to be one of the imperative needs.

Discussing with members of the National Committee in Krakow, in the first month of the war, the outcome of the struggle, he amazed them by saying, 'I don't understand you—guarantees for Poland? How do I know Germany and Austria will be the victors? And if they are beaten, what will their guarantees be worth?'

In March of 1916 a friend asked why he looked so distressed and he replied, "I am angry. The Russian Revolution should have been here by now. Why is it late?" To him that revolution, due to the defeats of the Russian armies, was an undoubted fact. When it did come, just one year from then, it meant for Poland a change of front from east to west. Pilsudski showed it on his maps with little flags.

Another mark of his genius was his power to distinguish great things from small. In the first years of independence, men would take to him some matter they thought of great importance. He was simply not interested. But he would take up in the greatest detail something they'd passed over as trifling. Later they saw that always he was right.

He had premonitions about the future and they proved to be correct so often that he came to trust them. In the spring of 1920 he felt that the Kiev expedition would succeed, but that he would lose two of his dearest friends. One of his aides had just been married and was given a fortnight's leave for a honeymoon, with orders to report to the Marshal wherever he might be. The young officer arrived and was told that Prince Radziwill, another aide, had been killed by the Bolsheviks. To the amazement of the staff, the bridegroom was immediately sent back to Warsaw with a letter for the Minister of War.

"But why did he send you? This is only an ordinary letter," said the puzzled minister. 283

No one knew till later that it was an effort to save the man's life and outwit fate. A third adjutant died from typhus, so the premonition came true in every detail.

Always bold, always calm and apparently untroubled, never in a hurry, he did everything quickly. He was patient with others, forgiving to his enemies, skillful in reconciling differences of opinion—between individuals, parties, nations. He honored efforts of will, sense of duty and of sacrifice, justice, a high sense of honor. He believed first of all in man's moral strength which enabled him to conquer the most difficult obstacles. Wise, good, clever, he was never swerved from his one goal by revolutionary talk or calumnies against his character or threats against his life.

He had devoted friends and admirers, and also devoted enemies. People were supremely loyal to him, or hated him violently, they were never indifferent. But as the years went on, the devoted admirers greatly outnumbered the enemies. Seldom has a public man in any country been so universally loved during his lifetime. The love and adoration of the *Strzelec* had spread to the Legions and then to all Poland.

He loved nature and would sit for hours, looking at the trees, at flowers, at a lake or river. He often talked to callers about flowers, drawing their attention to some near him and comparing this Polish variety of hortensja (something like the hydrangea) with one he had seen in Madeira which had a remarkable perfume. He had a special seat under one of the great trees in the Belvedere park; or he tramped up and down under a long line of trees, stopping at the end and leaning both elbows on the railing there, gazing into space and meditating.

People called him a fire-eater because he loved his soldiers and was happy with them. No other commander in the World War was so loved by his officers and his

284 men as was Pilsudski. No other knew so intimately his colleagues. No other kept in such close touch with them afterwards. Perhaps Napoleon's relation to his old soldiers and his marshals is comparable, but Napoleon gave his officers huge salaries and lands and high position, making some of them kings. Pilsudski gave no money, no great dignities, only the honor of being a Polish soldier. When men did well, he gave them more work to do.

He was twice married. His first wife was a widow, Madame Marja Koplewska-Juszkiewicz, who was known in P.P.S. circles as "the beautiful lady," the one who once served as "dromedary" for seventy-five books. She was a great patriot, devoted to Pilsudski's work, a gifted conversationalist, a delightful hostess to his many guests. She was courageous and intelligent, very beautiful, good, warm-hearted and impulsive; but also very talkative and not always tactful. She was a distinct personality—perhaps too much so to make the ideal wife for a man who was also a great personality, with one absorbing goal for which everything else was pushed aside. She had, by her first husband, a daughter Wanda, whom Pilsudski loved devotedly. She died while a student in Paris and he grieved greatly.

Later he married Miss Aleksandra Szczerbinska, the "Ola" who had helped in the Bezdany plans and in many another P.P.S. and *Bojowka* affair. She had been the head of the women's courier service of the P.O.W., taking orders directly from him. She was an excellent organizer in the party, in the war, and afterwards in the work for the widows and orphans of the Legions and for the unemployed. She was by nature silent, calm, very tactful. She too preferred a simple life and was always an informal hostess.

A group of Polish ladies from America visited Warsaw and were invited to tea at the Belvedere. They were not received formally. Madame Pilsudska walked about the rooms, chatting with this group and with that one.

The guests did not know who the simply-dressed woman was. When some one pointed her out, they said, "She talks with people as if she were just one of them—isn't she charming?"

In his private life Pilsudski had one great passion—children. He loved them and trusted them, and they loved him instinctively. They called him "Dziadek" (grandfather—or rather, granddaddy), whether they knew him or not. Inaccessible to the general public, children could always reach him. He would sit on the steps at the Belvedere with groups of children around him like a flock of birds. He watched their games and dances, heard them recite poems, praised and applauded them. His eyes were never stern then, there was no frown on his face. The first in the nation, he had much of the child in him. His love was repaid by all the children of Poland.

When he was middle-aged his two daughters brought a new richness and happiness into his life. They were named Wanda and Jadwiga, for a famous legendary princess and a great queen of Poland. One of his close friends to whom he was showing the baby Wanda, asked, "You surely wanted a son?"

"Do you know? I didn't," was the answer. "What would be my son's fate? He couldn't accomplish more than I have—the Polish state exists. And to be during one's whole life such a Wladyslaw Mickiewicz, son of Adam, always distinguished from other men, always having attention drawn to him just because he is the son of our great poet—that is surely a fate no one can envy."

The Marshal was never too busy to stop for a chat with his daughters, whom he loved exceedingly. His eyes shone when he looked at them, and when they were with him in public his face wore a happy look. An old friend of the Marshal said, "The adjutants had orders to let the two girls come into the workroom. He would interrupt our talk and call them to him. They would nestle fondly close to him. At such a moment I could feel all cares and

286 worries leaving him—and cares there were many connected with our affairs. A feeling of joy would permeate the atmosphere. These visits were usually short, but exceedingly charming.”

They were brought up in almost Spartan simplicity. They received many presents, sometimes expensive and elaborate ones. They were told that such gifts were not sent to them as Wanda and Jadwiga, but as the daughters of the Marshal whom the senders wished to honor, and the dolls and toys must be given to the children of the Legionaries who were in need. They played with the adjutants. They were interested in everything about the army. And later they discussed battles and military strategy with their father. One of them won a prize at school for the best shooting.

Aside from the children, Pilsudski had one absorbing love—for his country. He loved Poland, said one of his colleagues, as a man loves his wife, with reason and also with passion. He was like a lover whose sweetheart Russia and Germany and Austria were threatening. It was as if his romantic love made Poland a woman those three big ogres might injure and destroy. So sincere, so deep was his love for the country that he never spoke of it, even to his closest friends—except once, at a Legions reunion when he added, at the end of his talk, “Remember, boys, to love Poland—more than anything else in your lives.”

Avoiding the limelight, preferring to remain in the shadow, there were many stories and legends about Pilsudski. He was for years before his death a legendary figure because he seldom appeared in public. When his presence was obligatory at a reception he would show himself for a half-hour. On the third of May and the eleventh of November, the two great national holidays of Poland, he reviewed the troops, “taking the salute” on his favorite horse *Kasztanka*.

But his name-day, the nineteenth of March, gradually came to be one of the most important holidays. Public and private buildings were decorated with his picture, his initials, flags and banners of the Legions, and flooded with light in the evening. Every shop had something about him, almost every house put out the white and red flag. Great crowds went to the Belvedere, cheering for the Marshal. A legend, the symbol of the reborn Poland, there was combined with this a very human element because the people loved him. But he made it his practice not to be in the city on that day.

In Warsaw he accepted no social invitations, but asked his friends to come to him. He was a most delightful houseguest on the few occasions when he could be a guest. On his way back from Egypt, at the end of a chilly, rainy September, he stopped in Bucharest at the home of the Polish minister. There was a guestbook, kept for three generations in that family, which began with the autograph of Mickiewicz. Pilsudski looked over the book with great interest, for it bore many famous names. He wrote these sentences, typical of his style—brief, poignant with feeling, expressing something of his philosophy:

"Today is cold and wet. I sit here and blow on my fingers to warm them, as though it were already winter. I remember how I complained about the heat in the summer. Is man so stupidly made that he can not think of the future and forgets yesterday? Is he only for today?"

His knack for packing a sentence with meaning was further illustrated in the last talk the American Ambassador had with him. He mentioned the fact that there were so many million Poles in the United States and added how pleased they would be to receive a message from the Marshal.

"Yes, yes," acquiesced Pilsudski. "Let me think—tell them this: 'A good child never forgets his mother.'"

There is a saying that Poles do not recognize the worth of their public men until after their deaths. It was

288 true of Kosciuszko, of Stefan Batory, of Traugutt. Pilsudski broke the tradition, for he won during his lifetime the nation's recognition of the greatness of his services. The celebrations for the nineteenth of March were not for a victory, not for some historical event, but for a man.



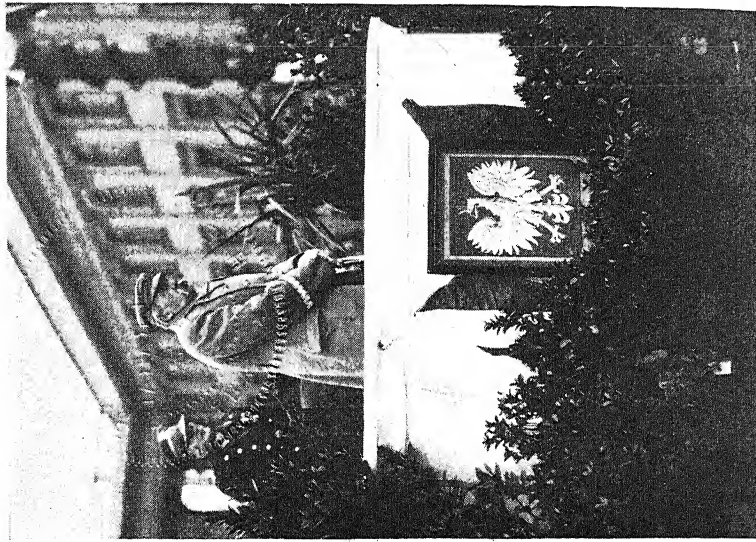
PILSUDSKI WITH HIS DAUGHTERS, WANDA ("WISIENKA") AND JADWIGA ("JAGODKA").



AT MADEIRA IN 1931. LIKE NAPOLEON, PILSUDSKI FREQUENTLY PLAYED PATIENCE.



THE MARSHAL ON HIS MORNING WALK FROM THE
BELVEDERE TO THE MINISTRY OF WAR. *Pikiel*



PILSUDSKI REVIEWING THE POLISH ARMY, IN FRONT
OF THE GENERAL STAFF OFFICES. *Swiatowid*

XVI.

THE END OF THE TRAIL.

After the *coup d'etat* Pilsudski's close friends noticed a change in him. His shoulders began to stoop—that ran in the family, his father had it, and one of his brothers. His hair turned gray, then white. He lost his gay humor and his face had constantly a sad expression.

In 1928 he was ill, having a long series of chills from which he did not recuperate. With one aide he went to Madeira to rest in the sunshine. He seemed entirely recovered, but on the steamer going back he caught cold and had another chill. After that, every spring and every autumn he had an attack of influenza. His iron constitution showed signs of giving way. He was in the sixties—not so old in years, but prison and Siberia and the strain of war should be counted double—or triple.

He turned over more and more work to his colleagues and his subordinates in the Cabinet and the Sejm, in the Ministry of War. Always he was watching over the nation, but he saw the danger to Poland of trusting everything to one man—what would come at his death? He must lead without giving orders. He wanted the men who had become accustomed to receiving his commands to decide for themselves, to ask, What would Pilsudski do? and then take the responsibility for their acts. He planned deliberately to make himself dispensable. He knew that he was coming to the end of the trail. Now and then there was a warning note in his words, as once when he said, "I will defend Poland at all costs—from outside,

290 especially from inside. But I am not eternal—I can not do everything.”

There had been times when he was disappointed in the Poles, when he was angry with them. After the darkness of slavery they were dazed with the sudden change and the first breath of independence. They suffered from waking pains and didn't always understand Pilsudski, who was teaching them what freedom meant.

Gradually the country was coming to itself. The nation was acquiring a patriotic consciousness. The last few years he was satisfied with Poland. He had lived long enough to sow and to reap the harvest—to see instead of chaos a people disciplined and consolidated, with men trained to carry on his work. He left to his countrymen three commands: stop disagreeing and unite; work, act, have the courage of action; believe in Poland.

In the summer of 1934 he followed the Challenge Airplane Race hour by hour and was familiar with every detail. He talked with the winner, asking him about the temperature and many technical questions. He congratulated him and said how pleased he was that Poland could take her place among the nations of the world and hold her own against all contestants. It was as if, speaking to Captain Bajan, he were speaking to the young people who will make the Poland of the future.

In February (1935) he went up to Wilno for the funeral of his sister Zofja—Zula, his special pal among the children at Zulow. He walked bareheaded behind her coffin and his nearest friends remarked how broken he seemed, what a great shock her death had been.

All over Poland, and especially in Warsaw, there were extraordinary celebrations for the nineteenth of March. There were so many delegations going out to the Belvedere that they began on the afternoon before and continued all that evening, and all the next day and evening, with bands and singing and cheering in the courtyard of the palace. But the Marshal was not at home.

His physicians had known for a year and a half that he was seriously ill. He refused to give up work. He would have no reference to his illness in the press, lest Poland become discouraged. In April a distinguished doctor from Vienna was summoned to Warsaw. He examined the patient, consulted with the Polish doctors, and after several days of observation gave his verdict—cancer of the liver, he might live some months—or some weeks. Fortunately he suffered little pain. From that time on, for those closest to him hope lessened day by day.

The last time he walked to his workroom in the Belvedere, supported by two aides, he stopped before a picture of himself, taken at the beginning of the war when he was nearly fifty. Gazing at it, he said slowly, "He was a brave boy—but now it has come to an end."

He insisted on giving an audience to a British diplomat. Later when the French Foreign Minister went to Warsaw to discuss a Locarno pact for eastern Europe, the Marshal was too ill to see him. He talked with his daughters about what they should do when school closed, and they made plans for the summer.

On Saturday, the eleventh of May, he had a talk with the general whom he had chosen to be the next commander-in-chief of the Polish army. Then, unexpectedly to the doctors, he had a bad hemorrhage. About noon he felt better, but said wearily to his wife, "I can't work. I haven't settled the promotions in the army, and my boys are still waiting." He thought always of his faithful soldiers.

The next morning, Sunday, he was visibly weaker. Without speaking, he stretched out his hand to bless his daughters. He died at eight-forty in the evening. His wife and daughters were with him, the adjutants, three doctors and a priest. Thirty-four years before he had escaped from the hospital in St. Petersburg. Nine years before, at that very hour, he had entered Warsaw, a rebel-

292 lious marshal at the head of a few companies of soldiers.

Warsaw wakened the next morning to find a proclamation from the President of Poland posted on the walls, a glowing tribute to the memory of this great leader of the nation.

To the citizens of the Republic:

Marshal Pilsudski has died.

With a lifetime of effort he built up the power of a nation. By the genius of his mind and the supreme exertion of his will he resurrected the state. He led it to the rebirth of its own might, to the liberation of forces on which the future destinies of Poland will be based. As reward for the magnitude of his labors it has been granted him to see our state a living thing, capable of enduring, prepared for life; and our army covered with the glory of victorious banners.

This man, the greatest throughout the whole of our history, drew the strength of his spirit from the depths of past ages and by superhuman mental effort he visualized the future paths for Poland to take.

He did not see himself in all this, because he had felt for a long time that his physical strength was ebbing. He looked for men and trained them for independent work, men on whom the burden of responsibility must fall in turn. He bequeathed to the nation a legacy of caring for the honor and might of the state. This inherited duty we, the living, must accept and put upon our shoulders.

Let our grief and sorrow deepen in us, in the whole nation, the appreciation of our responsibility to his spirit and to the generations yet to be.

The President of the Republic.

I. MOSCICKI.

All the capital was in mourning. All of Poland, too. Flags were half-masted, with long streamers of crepe. Public buildings were hung with black, and many private houses also. Every shop window displayed the Marshal's picture, with a frame of black or a crepe ribbon. All officials, every soldier and officer in the army, all school children wore a band of black on the sleeve. The Cabinet proclaimed national mourning, and the people of Poland obeyed not perfunctorily, but because they were sincerely grieving in their hearts. They all felt suddenly orphaned—workers, eminent writers, politicians, humble peasants,

leading generals, simple soldiers. Such universal grief for a public man is rarely seen. 293

The broad avenue leading to the Belvedere was closed to traffic and for three days crowds of sorrowing people went on foot, to stand in front of the palace in silent tribute to Marshal Pilsudski. The salon was converted into a mortuary chapel, its walls hung with black, an altar between the windows, a catafalque built up with three steps covered with red—a special sign of honor for king or president or Chief of State. Here the body lay, dressed in the uniform of a marshal, above it three historic banners—of 1831 and 1863 and the Legions.

Foreign visitors said of the state funeral that it was dignified, beautiful, artistic, with no splurge or vain display. Wednesday evening the body was taken to the cathedral, with an escort of soldiers, the family and close friends; so the newspapers announced, but the procession took an hour and a half to pass. The sidewalks were packed with people who had been waiting for hours. Windows were crowded with spectators. And all of them in utter silence. There was no sound but the tolling of church bells, the hooves of the horses, the measured tramp of many feet, walking slowly, the muffled drums.

The silver coffin was covered with a white pall and a Polish flag with the white eagle. On it lay the Marshal's baton, sword and gray cap. The street lights were covered with black. By the gun carriage that bore the coffin walked soldiers with flares that cast a yellow flickering light. And always that utter silence.

On Thursday the body lay in state at the cathedral and until after midnight endless lines of people passed by, to look for a last time upon his face, to render him a last honor. The decoration of the church was very beautiful, impressive in its simplicity. From the vaulting high above hung four wide streamers of white and red satin and four of black chiffon, draped back to the piers, so

294 that the catafalque was enclosed. The lights were focused on the coffin with its guard of soldiers.

On Friday morning, after mass at the cathedral, there was a procession through the capital to the flying field for a military review, "the last march past the Chief." The procession itself was remarkable, with a delegation from every regiment of the Polish army, monks, nuns in wide white headdresses, priests, the Diplomatic Corps, foreign military attachés and the special representatives of foreign nations, the Cabinet and members of Parliament, the heads of the various churches in Poland in gorgeous robes, presidents of universities in their medieval gowns, Poles from abroad and peasants in striped or flowered costumes, and the Marshal's horse with caparison of black. Officers dressed in the old Legion uniform carried the many decorations given to Pilsudski.

Opposite the tribune stood scores of delegations with their furled banners, bearing streamers of crepe. There were veterans and school children, political parties and social organizations, university students, Scouts and athletic clubs, men, women, children, standing for hours to pay a last tribute.

A nation sorrowing in review. The gun carriage with the coffin was placed on a mound and Pilsudski's old soldiers marched by, saluting him for the last time. Their emotion spread to the great throng of spectators who looked on in silence. Tramp of feet, the sound of horses' hooves, occasionally a word of command. Standards of all divisions of the army dipped three times in salute. A dramatic moment when a military band passing the mound raised their silver trumpets, but made no sound. Then the general in command rode back, saluted and reported, "Pan Marshal, the review is ended."

A stretch of railroad track had been built overnight by army engineers, connecting the flying field with the nearest railroad line. While the military bands played the Polish national anthem and the march of the First

Brigade, and guns fired a salute, the gun carriage with the coffin was drawn by the generals of the army to the main tracks, where it was placed on a flat car for the journey to Krakow. Rain had been threatening through the day, and just as the army's farewell was finished it came with thunder and lightning—as if the very heavens were mourning for the Marshal of Poland.

The funeral train went very, very slowly with stops in many towns. Flood lights fell on the coffin and the wreaths around it. Great crowds had gathered along the way to see it pass, and knelt in homage to Pilsudski. Bonfires flamed from the hilltops, the peasants' last salute. There was an impressive demonstration at Kielce, the first city which the Legions occupied after they crossed the frontier into Congress Kingdom in 1914. It was seven on Saturday morning when the train arrived at Krakow where all the station was hung in black.

The cortege formed for the procession through that charming, medieval city—from the station through the ancient marketplace, past the Church of Our Lady where trumpeters sounded the "Heynal" and on past the university to the hill that is called Wawel. It was much like the procession in Warsaw, but with many more people, especially more peasants and more delegations of associations and societies from all over Poland. It was four hours in passing.

On the steps of the cathedral the President of Poland made a short address. There was a service in the church and then the casket was carried down into the crypt where lie buried the kings of Poland and four not of royal birth—two soldiers, and two poets who kept alive the spirit of nationality during the Partitions. Here the Marshal's body was placed, near the tombs of Sobieski and Kosciuszko and Poniatoski. With two of these four leaders men associate the word "failure", with two of them "success". No one questioned the right of Pilsudski

296 to a place at the Wawel, the greatest honor Poland could pay him.

Conspirator, soldier of the Legions, Chief of State, premier, Minister of War, builder of the new Poland, at his death he became again a little boy and asked that his heart be taken to Wilno to lie at his mother's feet. Then, as all through his life, he was devoted to her memory.

Krakow had a hundred and thirty thousand visitors that day. Only a few hundred could hear the service in the cathedral. Loud speakers were installed all over the city and people knelt in the street before the microphones, weeping as they listened to the description of a major and a simple N.C.O. who had served under the Marshal. All over Poland people in their homes wept as they heard the broadcast from Krakow.

"To the shades of kings," said the President of Poland, "is added a new companion in eternal rest. Though his head bears no crown and his hand carries no scepter, he was king of our hearts and master of our desires."

Did the people remember on that day that Pilsudski's mother had said to him, "One is obliged to sacrifice himself for the nation. It is a hard thing during life—a loneliness. And after death it is eternal glory."

Poland was stricken, bowed down in her grief. It was as if each household had lost a father, each district its special leader. When an Englishman offered to pay generously for a place in the window of a private house in Krakow, the hostess answered simply, "I could not take any money, sir—why, I would not for the funeral of my own father, much less for the Marshal."

Jozef Pilsudski rests in the Wawel. Others will continue his work, to make Poland strong and prosperous at home and respected abroad. But they know that no one can take his place. The greatest honor they can pay his memory is to have, as he had all his life long, only one goal—to serve his country.

During his lifetime he was raised high above the common level and became a monumental figure. He had the soul of a leader. He belonged to that group, small throughout history, whom God chooses to carve out human destinies, to map out roads for the nations and conduct the people along them. The admiration felt for him by his countrymen will increase constantly.

It is too soon to assign his place in history. Two or three generations must pass before there is perspective enough to see him in relation to his era, to Poland's history, to the rest of Europe, to the world. As commander-in-chief in 1920, as executive, as adviser in financial matters, as initiator of plans for the Foreign Office he gave a monumental service to the reborn state. Separately these speak of greatness. All of them together arouse our admiration. His greatness is already looming, foreshadowing the verdict of history.

Some compare him with Kosciuszko and Poniatowski, but he knew how to do what they could not do—rouse people of all ranks and make them believe in their own strength. Some compare him with Stefan Batory, but that king, fighting against quarrelsome nobles and governmental disorder, had a brief reign of ten years and did not finish his task. Some, going farther back, compare him with Ladislav Lokietek who united the state, and Kazimierz the Great who strengthened it internally, and Ladislav Jagiello who defended it; but they worked under medieval conditions in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. And some compare him with Boleslaw the Brave who was both a great military leader and a politician, attaining a higher place than any of his contemporaries in Europe; a stern man, yet at his death in 1025 there was a whole year of mourning in Poland.

There is indeed no figure in the long past of Polish history to be compared with Josef Pilsudski. Among the outstanding names there is not one who was both successful soldier and successful builder. He lived in a unique

298 era, for his career began in the worst days of slavery and ended on the heights. No other Pole has occupied such a position, concentrating in his hands so much power. He stands alone, a symbol of his country. The nation partitioned—the World War—making the frontiers of a re-born state—the great danger of the Bolshevist invasion—typical Polish disorder resulting from a weak government—at last a strong government and Poland's place in the world assured: the merest outline of his life is a summary of the story of Poland.

A solitary figure standing on a unique summit of history, which will become higher and higher as the perspective increases. He was not a prophet with no honor in his own country. Many monuments were erected during his lifetime, and his tomb at the Wawel became immediately a shrine to which the people go in ever increasing numbers, to look upon his face, noble and beautiful in death, under the glass panels of the silver casket.

The Belvedere and the Sulejowek villa are both Pilsudski museums, with their rooms furnished just as they were in the Marshal's lifetime. In the palace in Warsaw are four rooms filled with various gifts sent by admirers everywhere—including many from Polish peasants. Five large cases of decorations, and a gray cap with the white eagle—the last one he wore.

But the real memorial of Pilsudski is the great mound of earth at Sowiniec (So-veen'-yets), a village near Krakow, across the Vistula from the Kosciuszko mound. Poles love the soil itself and it is an old custom, dating back to the legendary Krakus and Wanda, to show special honor by making a high mound from small gifts of earth brought by hundreds and thousands of people. Cabinet members, school children, countless organizations, visiting the crypt at the Wawel, went out to Sowiniec, each person taking a basket or a barrow of earth. Sometimes this was carried from a place nearby, sometimes it

was historic soil, brought from some distant spot associated with the Marshal. 299

Forty-eight contributions of earth were sent by the governors of all the states in the U.S.A. and these too contained historic soil—New York's from the breastworks of the battlefield at Saratoga, a battle whose strategy was planned by Kosciuszko; Arizona's from the Grand Canyon, in a jar made by Hopi Indians; Pennsylvania's from Valley Forge; New Jersey's from Washington's headquarters; Illinois' from the grave of Abraham Lincoln.

How does Pilsudski rank with other leaders? Like Jeanne d'Arc, he rallied a nation that had become discouraged after repeated defeats in war, made his apathetic countrymen believe that victory was possible, and expelled the invader. Like Oliver Cromwell, he was both leader of the army and head of the government. Or his service to Poland may be compared to the joint labors of four men for Italy—Mazzini, the inveterate conspirator; Garibaldi, the dramatic guerilla leader in the red shirt; Cavour, the builder of strong foundations; and Mussolini, the dictator of our own day. But none of these statements covers satisfactorily the many-sided achievements of the Marshal.

There is but one man in history to compare with this Polish patriot—George Washington who with an army of volunteers led a successful rebellion against a powerful empire. In many details their lives were similar: Each laid down his great power when he might easily have made himself king or dictator. Each had enemies, sometimes very bitter enemies, who stooped to personal insults and low intrigues. Each made his decisions and worked toward them, undeterred by blame or praise, by any storm of public opinion. Each had great self-control, but on occasion could show great anger. Each had hands ever clean so that no man could charge him with profiting

300 by his high office. Each was a pillar on which centered the life of the nation.

Both were born into families well-to-do, if not wealthy. Both lacked the training of a university or a regulation military school, yet self-taught proved themselves remarkable strategists who won great admiration from experts. Both surrounded themselves, in the administration of a new state, with able young men, many of whom they had trained in war, and put them into high positions of trust to serve the nation. At their deaths they were the same age—three score years and seven.

There are those who say Josef Pilsudski will be remembered as the man who won independence for Poland, partitioned among three neighboring empires; that his greatest merit was not his achievements in war, great as those were, but that he resurrected faith in the hearts of a discouraged, passive people and inspired them with his own confidence that it was possible to fight and to win.

There are those who say he will be remembered less for this than for his greater work in building up the reborn state from the chaos and disorder existing on his return from Magdeburg to the strong power it is today; for his stern putting down of the governmental quarreling and confusion which were traditional in Poland, for his fight against corruption, for the stabilization of the country's finances and the adoption of the budget system.

And there are those who, taking a wider view, think he will be remembered as the man whose peace policy with Russia and Germany, for a thousand years the traditional enemies of Poland, was the prelude to a general peace in Europe, pointing out the way to the nations of the world. His was the constructive plan both of a skillful soldier and of a sincere lover of peace.

It is too soon to judge, to award him a final niche in history. The present generation can but grieve at his passing and say of Pilsudski, as was said of Lincoln,

So came the Captain with the mighty heart.
* * * He held his place,
Held the long purpose like a growing tree,
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise,
Held on in calm rough-hewn sublimity,
And when he fell * * * he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

To honor him most, they must dedicate their lives to the great task remaining before them, pledging increased devotion to the cause for which he gave the last full measure of devotion—to Poland.

lasted two days when two hundred and fifty Poles were pitted against fifteen hundred Russians who had artillery.

But for the most part these encounters were not real battles with regular tactics. They were raids and ambushes, attacks on arsenals and patrols, the result of chance. Smaller groups now, usually under a thousand, easily dispersed. Never enough arms, never enough ammunition. Yet stamped out at one point, the fires of insurrection would blaze up in another.

Other countries were in general friendly to Polish aspirations, but would not run the risk of a European war over the Polish question. Napoleon III had proclaimed himself the champion of all oppressed groups; he promised lavishly, but his scheme to form an alliance among the western Powers to aid Poland came to nothing. England, always against Russia, was not sufficiently interested in that remote inland country to take any decisive action, so soon after the Crimean War.

After weeks of negotiating the two nations joined with Austria in a protest to Russia. It met with a contemptuous, evasive answer. Protests and threats—and the Poles were left to their fate. Bismarck was working with the czar, eager to seize the opportunity to stamp out once and for all hopes of Polish independence.

Uncertain of their own strength, the volunteers began to lose confidence and to doubt their victory. The insurrection changed to guerilla warfare. Yet it did not die out after a few months. It was a struggle of badly equipped, badly organized insurgent bands against the empire of the czars, a handful of young Poles and their madness against the Russian colossus.

For a full year and a half they persisted, hoping always that whole communities of peasants would join them, hoping too to impress western Europe and secure armed intervention. They wanted to make the insurrection last as long as they possibly could, with the minimum of lives sacrificed; so they seldom attacked unless the enemy were retreating.

Winter was the most difficult time. The Central Committee turned over their power to a dictator, the noble Traugutt, who tried to reorganize the army and make the civil government efficient when it was working under a thickening net of police persecution; but even his great strength of will could not keep the uprising alive. The hopes of the nation had changed to a bitter pessimism. The mass of the people took no great part. The peasants' share was hardly more than a dream of the 1863 idealists.

Single little military demonstrations began to die out. Leaders thought only of resisting stubbornly, not of attacking aggressively. They marched and retreated, losing men not in actual fighting so much as by the dispersion of exhausted groups. One by one the guerilla bands were rounded up by the enemy. With the arrest of Traugutt in April of 1864 and his execution in August the national government fell and it was all over. By the time the last sparks were extinguished, Russia had sent into the country no less than four hundred thousand men.

"We died," a Polish writer represents those heroic soldiers as speaking to future generations, "we died not for nothing. Our death may be knowledge for you."

1863 was an unsuccessful attempt, on the part of ardent youth, to regain Poland's independence. It was marked by great heroism and courage, by devotion and enormous sacrifices from both men and women. It was punished with ruthless hand. To Russian psychology there was only one way to crush the Polish spirit of resistance—cruelty with no thought of sentiment. From this time dates Russia's violent hatred for her minorities.

Actual losses in battle totaled about twenty-five thousand, but the victims of czarist reaction were four times as many. The police were doubled and were organized like an army. They were not reprovved for cruelty. Whips in the hands of cavalry were a daily story. Pris-

ons already full were crowded still more. Every Pole in a government post was dismissed, and places filled with the scum of a corrupt bureaucracy.

Between peasants and landowners the Russians fomented a spirit of hostility to break up the solidarity of the nation. Because the Roman Church was everywhere a center of Polish culture and a teacher of patriotism, it was deprived of its privileges: bishops were exiled, lands confiscated, monasteries suppressed, priests forbidden to travel, to build or repair a church, to minister to the sick outside their own parishes—save with special permissions.

Russian Poland was governed as a conquered country. For administrative purposes it was divided into three parts: the eastern provinces, with Kiev the larg-



POLAND PARTITIONED. RUSSIA, WITH THE LION'S SHARE, DIVIDED HERS INTO THREE PARTS.

14 est city; the central part with the largest population, called by the Poles "Congress Kingdom" because its boundaries as a separate kingdom had been arranged at the Congress of Vienna in 1815—it was about as large as New York state, as large as England plus Scotland; and lastly the third part, Lithuania, that northern district which from 1386 on was a part of Poland, its largest town Wilno—not to be confounded with the political division we know as Lithuania since the World War. Many a man born in that northern section would say proudly when asked if he was a Pole, "Yes, I am a Lithuanian," just as some Britishers answer, "Yes, I am Scotch—or Welsh," just as some Americans answer, "Yes, I am a Virginian," or "Yes, I'm a New Englander."

After the insurrection of 1863 these three parts of Russian Poland were ruled by military governors chosen by the czar. The whole administration was Russian. That was the language used in schools and courts, in all official business. There was no local self-government, no trial by jury—privileges that the Russians enjoyed. Estates were confiscated, their owners exiled, and "contributions," as they were euphoniously termed, demanded—exorbitant sums that beggared the victims.

Here is the record for twenty months in "Congress Kingdom":

396 executions
12,211 prison sentences
10,398 of these for penal servitude
7,000 and more exiled
1,979 of these sent to Siberia
1,660 estates confiscated, to say nothing of the sums that went into the pockets of Russian officials.

But nowhere was the punishment so severe as in Lithuania, a district always distinguished for patriotism. It was no longer considered a part of Poland, but was Russian soil. It became the house of servitude *par excellence*. Here Count Muraviev was governor, he whom

the Poles called "the hangman" and "the executioner of Wilno." He was notorious for his cruelty and drastic measures in stamping out the insurrection, the century's best example of political sadism.

He condemned to death more than five thousand persons. He confiscated seventeen hundred and ninety-four estates and levied "contributions" totaling fourteen million roubles. Poles were forbidden to buy land. He made no attempt to cover this russification with the cloak of the law as Bismarck did in German Poland. Here sentences were pronounced not only by the courts but also by administrative process, without any trial, on no more evidence than suspicions.

One village sheltered a wounded rebel. Cossacks surrounded it and burned all the cottages. The peasants nearby were forced to plow its site. Thus Muraviev crushed out 1863, writing the story in blood.

Lithuania was like a graveyard. The manor houses had been centers of the independence idea and were now the particular object of Muraviev's hatred. On many estates only women and children remained. Ladies went into permanent mourning, not to express their personal sorrow, but a national mourning for Poland. It was not punishment in Lithuania, it was persecution and martyrdom.

Bare facts and figures tell only a part of the story. The greatest tragedy was the change in Polish character. It was more than men that died. On those battlefields, in those skirmishes faith itself had died. Now came a generation with no confidence in its own strength, a period of denial and doubt when men turned away from daring thoughts, when ideals were called vague dreams and only material demands considered.

All possibility of military action died out. People spoke of 1863 as the last of the great romantic escapades, pathetic and hopeless, noble but how foolish, heroic but how suicidal! Never again would they make such a

16 mad attempt; instead they would try to keep alive Polish culture and through day by day efforts strive for economic and educational improvement. Perhaps in three or four generations they would be strong enough to prepare adequately for war and to fight again. There must be no repetition of 1863.

A second result was the enormous change in the social and economic life of the Poles. The *élite* of the nation, the best patriots, the idealists, the energetic leaders were nearly all gone—dead or exiled. The nobility who for centuries had been the dominant group lost their place at the head of the community, never to regain it. They had played their last role in Polish history.

Their sons, ruined financially through the loss of their estates, went into professional life and were added to the developing middle class of the towns. In a few years this group began to take the place formerly held by the nobles.

A third result was that, with the failure of 1863, the Polish question ceased to be of international interest. It became what Russia and Germany and Austria insisted it should be—an internal question for the Partitioning Powers alone to deal with.

Lastly there came a school of political thought that branded with the word "romantic" every suggestion of an independent Poland. A man who urged concerted action against Russia, if only to win some concession from the czar, found people sceptical and shying away from any plan verging on illegality. Some Poles tried to propitiate the authorities by openly protesting their loyalty to Russia. Some argued that the best way to serve Poland was not to irritate Russia, but to cooperate with her. Political life ceased to exist. People wanted to forget 1863 and not to think of the past. They asked only to live in peace.

Independence? That was a dream, living only in the prayers of women, in the dreamy lines of poets, in the sensitive hearts of children.

In a lecture given in 1924 Pilsudski said, "The effects of 1863 are so profound that one can say: Even today every child born is marked by the year 1863."

Poland was a fair land, a rich land, blessed by nature. It had more variety of scenery than the monotonous, flat landscape suggested by the name; for Poland means "the country of the plain." From the Baltic seacoast and the melancholy northern provinces, with their gray skies and mysterious forests, through the lake district, past vast stretches of fertile farms that once gave her the title, "the granary of Europe," on to the mountains in the south, snow-covered throughout the year, Poland offered a diversified picture. A country with a marvelous spring time, after the long, hard winter. Towns with walls and gates and marketplaces of unspoiled medieval look. Cities with fascinating styles of architecture in churches and palaces. Peasants in gay striped or flowered costumes. An artistic people, with an exceedingly ancient culture.

Yes, a rich land of great beauty. Yet a sad land, like a fair lady clad in deepest mourning. Over it all, from seacoast to mountains, but particularly over Russian Poland, lay the pall of enslavement, the black clouds of political oppression and persecution.

II.

AT ZULOW.

Shortly after 1863, in a period of national grief and suffering, Jozef Pilsudski was born. The fifth of December, 1867.

A cold night, with a snowstorm raging. Some Russian officers returning from camp saw the manor house on the Zulow (barred l—Zu'-woof) estate with all the windows lighted. They thought Polish conspirators must be meeting there, went to the house, and demanded to see the owner. They were kept waiting a long time and when finally he came, it was to explain simply, "My son is just this moment born." There was a conspirator in the house, but the Russians did not know it till years later.

It is not without significance that Pilsudski was born in Lithuania, the birthplace of Kosciuszko and of Mickiewicz, greatest of Polish poets; that he was born in that northern country where the landscape has a certain romantic and melancholy quality, and kept all his life characteristics of men from the borderland—they are silent, determined, secretive, yet full of kindness, goodness, sentiment.

Zulow was an estate of thirty thousand acres, northeast from Wilno, partly forest, partly arable land. There was a large park, with fine trees and a pond, and a frame house with classic pediment and white columns, ten rooms all on one floor—just such a house as you see today all through that district. There was an annex for

guests and servants, a separate house for the kitchens, and more than the usual number of farm buildings. The forest was close to the house and sometimes bears came into the garden.

The families of Pilsudski's parents were nobles, with a history reaching far back. Legend tells of a Prince Ginet (Geé-net), a heathen chieftain of Lithuania, who headed the delegation sent to Krakow in 1386 to arrange the details for the wedding of Jadwiga, the beautiful girl-queen of Poland, and Ladislas Jagiello, grand duke of Lithuania—a wedding that was followed by the Christianizing of Lithuania and the federal union of the two peoples and the founding of the famous Jagiellonian dynasty that reigned in Poland for two hundred years.

At a meeting of the northern chiefs in 1430—this is not legend but written history—Prince Ginet urged that the Lithuanians should abide by that union and consolidate the two lands. Old records show that the Ginets married into six important families. In 1625 one of them inherited an estate called "Pilsudy" and took the name Ginet-Pilsudski. To an expert in heraldry one detail of the Pilsudski crest shows that this was a princely family.

The mother's line, Billewicz (Bill-lay'-veets), goes back still farther—to the ancestor of Ladislas Jagiello, the Lithuanian duke Giedymin who in 1320 moved his capital to Wilno. Several times there had been marriages between the Ginets and the Billewicz.

The two families were then well acquainted. Jozef Pilsudski and Marja Billewicz had been friends for some time when they found that they loved each other. He was nine years the elder, and a cousin of her mother. They were betrothed during feverish preparations for the insurrection of 1863 and were married very quietly after it broke out. The bridegroom took no part in the many skirmishes and small battles, but served as com-

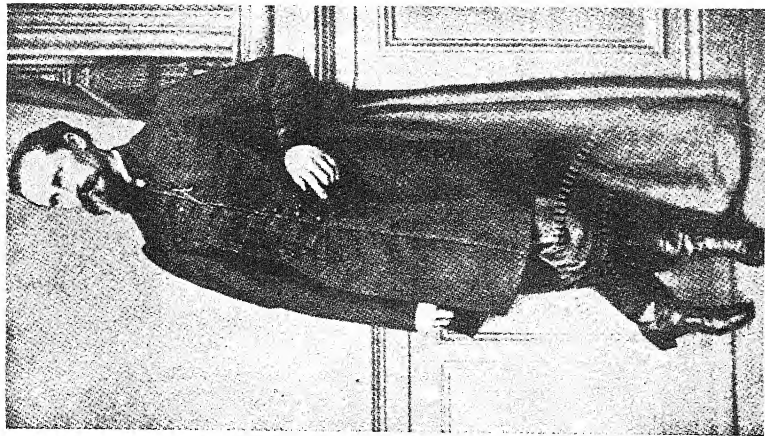
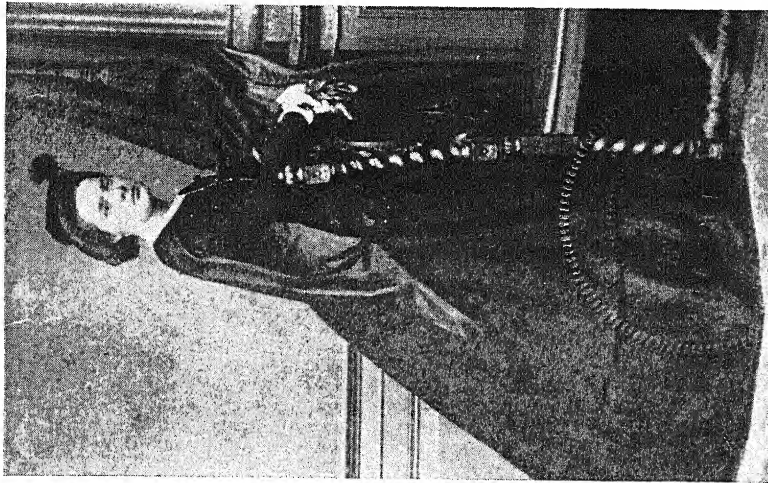
20 missioner for the civil government set up by the secret Committee in Warsaw.

Persecuted by the Russians, pursued by Cossacks, the young couple had to flee from the Pilsudski estate. They stayed for a time in Wilno and then installed themselves at Zulow which she had inherited from her mother.

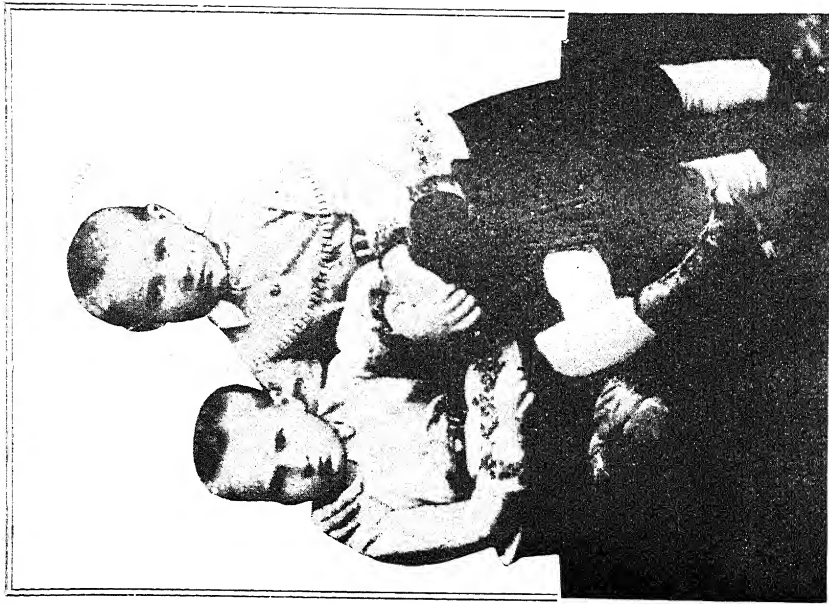
Pilsudski was an educated agriculturist and had great plans to introduce new methods at Zulow and industrialize the estate—pioneer work in Lithuania. He had three or four hundred head of cattle. He built windmills, a yeast factory, a refrigerating plant, brick kilns, a turpentine factory, a brewery, flour mill and sawmill, taking up each new project enthusiastically but soon dropping it to begin another. He made none of them pay and little by little got deep and deeper into debt. Always busy with the affairs of the estate and of the community, he gave little time to his family and left the upbringing of the children to his wife.

Madame Pilsudska was a very remarkable woman. In *The Deluge* Sienkiewicz describes the old chateau where she was born as the home of his heroine whom he named Billewicz—a proud, sympathetic figure, a noble type of Polish womanhood. And that was exactly what Marja Pilsudska was. Her picture in her son's bedroom at the Bevedere shows a beautiful lady with thoughtful face and calm eyes. Like many a woman of that insurrection epoch she is dressed in mourning, with an expression of premature sadness. If the son was called the incarnation of the Polish race, the phrase applies to the mother also.

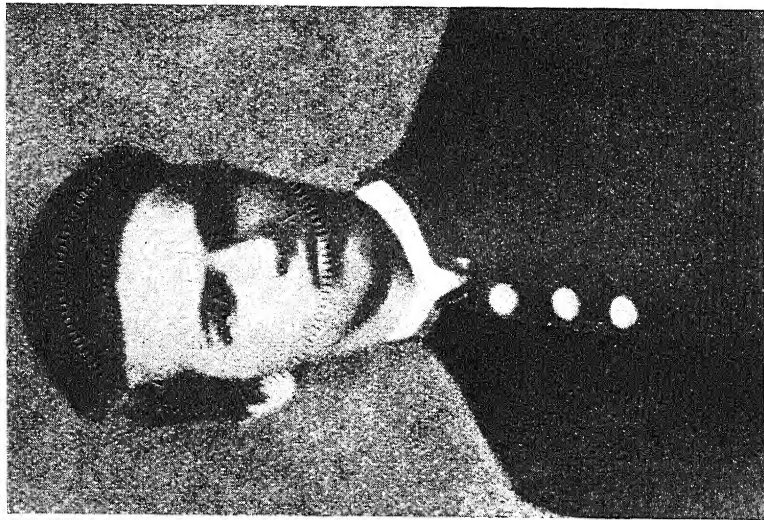
A model wife, manager of a busy household, she devoted herself to her children. She was a woman of strong character, high spirited, quick to understand and to make decisions. Hard and pure as a diamond, one of her sons described her years later, proud only to a Russian. She was a flaming patriot, acknowledging the



PILSUDSKI'S PARENTS. HIS FATHER WAS COMMISSIONER FOR THE SECRET NATIONAL COMMITTEE IN 1863. HIS MOTHER WAS A BURNING PATRIOT AND TAUGHT HER CHILDREN TO HATE CZARDOM. *Photo-Plat*



JOZEF, CALLED AT HOME "LITTLE ZIUK," WITH HIS OLDER BROTHER, BRONISLAW (STANDING).



A SCHOOL BOY IN THE RUSSIAN GIMNAZIUM IN WILNO, PILSUDSKI DREAMED OF WAR WITH RUSSIA. THE IDEA OF INDEPENDENCE LIVED ONLY IN THE PRAYERS OF WOMEN AND THE SENSITIVE HEARTS OF CHILDREN.

complete failure of the recent insurrection, yet never despairing of Poland. 1863 must be only the reason for fighting again, a stimulant to some heroic action.

Much of this she owed to her grandfather with whom she lived after her mother's death when she was four. He loved her, but brought her up with a Spartan regime. She was very delicate and he wanted to make her soul strong and indomitable, to overcome her weak constitution. He always regretted that she was not a boy and discussed Polish history and current events with her as if she would grow up to lead a charge on the battlefield.

During her childhood the Poles were still being punished for the insurrection of 1830. She was six when the uprising of 1848 ended with another failure. She was old enough to understand when the Crimean War came and her grandfather told her Mickiewicz had died of cholera while trying to raise a Polish Legion there, and what an opportunity the Poles had lost—an opportunity to fight side by side with France and England and make them realize that the Polish question was not dead.

Often in their long talks he would speak of Kosciuszko whom he admired most of all, and would declare that Poland must rely on her own efforts to win independence, that she needed a leader who should be self-reliant, indomitable, entirely devoted to this one aim, with a magnetic personality able to draw the nation to his side.

Jozef Klemens, as that December baby was christened, was the fourth child in the Pilsudski family, the second son. There were three more children born at Zulow.

There was little amusement at this manor house, never dancing, for the country was in mourning. Russians, no matter how high officials they might be, were not invited to Zulow. But there were many guests,

22 relatives staying at the house often. With so many brothers and sisters, with a large park to play in, fields and forest to enjoy, with a pony and a boat on the pond, with affectionate parents who gave them if not luxury, at least more than comfort, Jozef's childhood would have been a happy country idyl—but for one thing, the thing that made his father's face sad and worried, made his mother's eyes fill with tears. 1863 was all too fresh in their minds.

Madame Pilsudska was strict with the children. She disapproved of their complaining about each other, she preached harmony among brothers and sisters, she instilled in them a high sense of duty. They were not to treat people as inferiors, whoever they might be. The servants were told not to give the children what they asked for, unless the asking was polite.

Bronislas, the oldest son, was a serious boy, interested only in his studies. Zofja, whom they called Zula, and little Ziuk, their nickname for Jozef, were the most lively of the children and were great pals. The mother saw in Ziuk, when still a child, unusual energy and the instinct of leadership. She loved him more than the others and devoted herself particularly to him, exerting all her influence, moulding his character. She taught him to read and write. She taught him love of country, a knight's honor and duty.

She made the manor house at Zulow a treasury that kept alive traditions of the struggle for independence. She would never admit a permanent defeat, would not let her family resign itself passively to the Russian yoke, but taught her children to hate czardom and to remember the tragic hours Poland had lived through. She fortified the soul of this favorite son, to make of him the future defender and soldier of Poland.

Long afterward, during years of stress and strain in Warsaw, he said, "When I am at a loss to know what to do, when the world is against me, when people

are angry and ready to accuse me, when circumstances seem to be working against my plans, then I ask myself what would have been my mother's advice, and I act as I think she would have counseled me without regard to anything else."

She seemed to her children a symbol of Poland itself, struggling against czardom. There was at Zulow, Pilsudski explained years after they had left the estate, a current of national exaltation, most intense and powerful, that ran through the household like a torrent, nourished by the fervent enthusiasm of that woman patriot.

Ziuk was a courageous boy, with a headstrong obstinacy. There was only one way to bend his will—to appeal to his honor. With that word, his mother could get him to do anything. His strong will and his energy dominated the other children, even those who were older than he. It was Ziuk who directed their games and acted as judge in their differences. He invented some exercises to develop their courage—such as sending them into a dark room, at the far end of the house, to bring some object he had hidden there.

What a background that decade and that environment created for a sensitive lad! He heard constantly stories—all too true—of exiles in Siberia, of the persecution of a village priest, of confiscations and "contributions" exacted by Muraviev and his followers, of cruelty and violence on the part of Russian soldiers. He saw people tremble at the sight of some petty official's uniform, saw the faces of the older people grow long when a servant announced the visit of some representative of the czar. He knew of supper tables, set on Christmas Eve with vacant places for fathers or sons in Siberia.

In their own family there was tragedy aplenty. His great-uncle had died in exile. A cousin of his father had been killed in battle, another cousin's estate was

24 confiscated. His blind grandmother was in prison for some time, his aunt, and several other women relatives. Bronislas, only a year older than Ziuk, could remember when they had hidden in their house a wounded Polish soldier.

Jozef was still a little boy when he first became acquainted with forbidden books, not allowed by the rigid Russian censorship. From the hiding place she alone knew, the mother would bring out some of her little store of Polish books—just possessing them was sufficient for deportation to Siberia. She would read to her youthful audience Polish history—of Kosciuszko who had been born there in Lithuania, of kings and heroes who had fought for Poland—and the sublime writings of the three great poets: Krasinski whose work she loved the best, Slowacki who was always Ziuk's favorite, and Mickiewicz, "the poet of patriotism," who had lived not far away from Zulow.

She read, her face inspired, and they learned many passages by heart. She taught them the Lord's prayer in Polish. With her cheek pressed against his, she breathed into her favorite son her own patriotism. Years later he wrote, "Even now in my memory rings the historic psalm that always ended our reading, 'Poland will be—in the name of God.'"

The mystery surrounding those hours, the mother's agitation and emotion that spread to the children, the quick hiding away of the books if the sound of bells on the horses warned them of the arrival of a Russian, the change of scene if by chance some undesirable person came on the group—all that made a deep impression on the Pilsudski children, so deep that time could not efface it. It was a continual conspiracy in their own family.

Helena, Zofja, Bronislas, Jozef, Adam, Kazimierz, Marja—seven children growing up, plus the Swiss governess who taught them French and German. The manor house was all too small and they began building a new

one. The summer of 1874 was very hot. While the parents were in Wilno on business a disastrous fire broke out, caused no one knew how. First a large barn burned, then the kitchens, then it spread to the manor house, to the new home, not yet finished, to the farm buildings with that year's plentiful harvest, the mills and the factories. Several kilometers of forest were burned too. In a few hours Zulow was in ruins.

There was fortunately no loss of life. The precious Polish books were saved. One granary was left, and the annex where the family lived for a time. The terrific losses from the fire, added to the burden of debts on the estate, brought enormous changes to the Pilsudskis. They had to alter their whole style of living. They decided to move to Wilno.

Eighteen years later Zulow was sold at auction—a compulsory sale. In 1934 the site of the manor house and some acres around it were purchased by the Polish Reservists. They are rebuilding the house, as far as possible as it was before—a circular lawn in front, the glass-roofed porch flanked by lilac bushes, the Ostra Brama madonna over the door, a wide cool hall, the large billiard room, even the dark storeroom which the children were afraid to pass. It will have a background of trees, with river and orchard. Zulow will be a national shrine.

III.

WILNO, "A DEAR TOWN."

Wilno is one of the oldest, the most interesting, the most beautiful of Polish cities. It is famous for the beauty of its setting, on romantic wooded hills above two winding rivers, and for the beauty of its architecture—Gothic and neo-classic, Renaissance and most of all baroque. It dates back at least to the tenth century and has been a place of historical importance since 1320 when Duke Giedymin made it his capital.

From the top of the hill near the cathedral one has a splendid view of Wilno with its rivers and hills, the many spires and towers that give it the name "city of churches." One gets a résumé of Polish history—from the ruins of Giedymin's castle and a tower built by Ladislas Jagiello, to a little cemetery for some soldiers of 1863, whose graves were unmarked for more than half a century.

Wilno is still beautiful in spite of its long years of enslavement, for after 1830 and again under Muraviev, the Russians carried on a long campaign to make this a thoroughly Russian town, as shabby as possible. The old walls were razed. Churches were changed from Roman Catholic to Greek Orthodox, one was turned into an officers' casino, an ancient monastery became barracks. Splendid palaces were used as prisons, hospitals, government offices, deprived of their decorations and so disfigured that all their splendor was lost. Yet in spite of all that vandalism Wilno has a marked individuality

and the reputation of being the finest baroque city in all Poland. 27

Muraviev closed the Wilno theater. He put up signs on the streets,

"IT IS FORBIDDEN TO SPEAK POLISH."

The language was banned in schools and courts, in any public place. Once a woman asked for a loaf of bread in Polish, and the baker was fined two hundred roubles. School children were sent to the Russian churches for services in honor of the czar and his family.

To this beautiful, enslaved city Jozef Pilsudski went when he was seven. The Pilsudskis were no longer rich magnates. The family was large, its needs many; there were often money troubles. Zulow with its park and forest and pond vanished like a dream. They lived in the apartment of an average middle-class family. More children came—Jan and Ludwika and Kaspar, and the short-lived twins.

Pilsudski loved Wilno, loved it with a passionate affection that lasted to the end of his life. Often he referred to it, saying not the one word but "dear Wilno" or "beloved Wilno." The depth of his feeling and its real sincerity show plainly, even in the translation of some paragraphs of an address he gave there in 1928.

One of the most lovely things in my life has been Wilno, the city of my childhood. Often in Magdeburg (where he was interned in 1917-18) I thought of Wilno and longed for Wilno.

A dear town. The walls surround it. The green-decked hills caress the masonry of the walls. The buildings look up to the hills.

A dear town. If you ascend a hill, the shimmering towers, large and small, rise through the haze toward the sky, so that when the bells sound you do not know whether they are complaining or asking for mercy or sending their voices skyward through longing.

A dear town. Its walls caressed me as a child and taught me to love the greatness of truth.

A dear town with so many, many memories. Wilno is the symbol of our great culture and the one-time greatness of our state. The dynasty of the Jagiellons who ruled with power over the towers of Krakow and the towers of Wilno. The Wilno of Stefan Batory who founded the university and

carved new frontiers with his sword. The great poets and seers who soothed the nation with their words and in the magic of their verse gave life to the people, were taught here in the school to which I ran, within these walls that praise God so splendidly in their beauty, that contained the accursed Russian school I once attended.

All that is beautiful in my soul has been tenderly nourished by Wilno. Here I heard the first words of love, here the first words of wisdom. All my childhood and youth were rounded by these walls, caressed by these hills. It is one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

Here Pilsudski lived for the next eleven years. At first the children had lessons with their mother and with private teachers. Then the two older boys were sent to public school—the First *Gimnazjum* of Wilno, housed in the former university where Slowacki and Mickiewicz had been students. It was not free, but the tuition fees were low. Ziuk, not quite ten, came out with flying colors in his entrance examinations, a “five” in every subject, five being the highest mark given. Indeed he did better than his brother. Together they entered the third class, Ziuk the youngest in the group. He was from the beginning one of the influential boys, looked up to by the others because he was manly, firm and calm.

That was not an ordinary public school. It was a Russian *gimnazjum* with Russian masters—not chosen for that reason, the Pilsudskis had no choice. In Wilno, in all Lithuania there was no Polish school. Muraviev used education as one method of russification: boys were severely punished if they spoke Polish, or if they spoke Russian incorrectly, or even with a bad accent. Teachers were encouraged to make slighting remarks about Poles, to speak of Polish heroes with contempt and insults. The special Russian textbooks falsified history. Into the classroom came all the heat of politics. The aim was to crush the independence of the boys, to trample on their pride and their personal dignity. It was persecution plus assimilation, lessons with police methods, according to the formula, “for God, the czar and Russia.”

For the first time in his life Pilsudski came in contact with tyranny and barbarism and martyrdom, with spies and moral torture, with the buying of some pupils, with constant provocations—and he could do nothing. The eight years of that Russian *gimnazjum* he described long afterward as among the most unpleasant of his life, a kind of prison sentence with hard labor—this when he could speak of Siberia from his own experience.

A fairly capable boy, he modestly named himself, and the lessons assigned gave him no trouble so that he went along easily from class to class. It was the atmosphere that crushed him, the masters' injustice, their harassing way of teaching. Every plucky thought was wiped out. Everything his mother had taught him to respect and to love was now degraded and insulted, everything Polish spat upon. His hatred of Russian oppression and of all czarist agencies grew from year to year.

As long as he lived, he never forgot the deep impressions of that *gimnazjum*, never could rid himself of the terrible memories of the torture chamber. Whenever he had bad dreams it was always a Wilno master who played the chief role.

One of his classmates remembers still the day when during a history lesson the teacher made some slighting remark about 1863. The Pilsudski boys sat in the front row. Suddenly Ziuk stood up, crying out something. Bronislas jerked him down into his seat. But the master had caught a bit of it and reported the boy to the principal. From that time on he had to endure petty persecutions.

That classmate, now an old man, remembers too the boys' name for the *gimnazjum* office—"the school residence of Muraviev's cowardliness and barbarity."

What could a boy not yet in his teens do? Jozef was choked by his helpless fury. He felt ashamed that a Pole could do nothing against his enemies. He had to suffer silently, with burning cheeks, to listen to lies and scorn-

30 ful remarks about Poland and the Poles. The sense of constant oppression weighed on his heart like a millstone. He felt himself a slave who could be crushed at any moment like a worm.

It was especially hard for a boy reared under the gentle protection of such a mother as Madame Pilsudska, in an atmosphere of burning love for Poland, where much was made of family traditions of ancestors who had always fought for their country and given everything for it. Desperate, with rage in his heart, Ziuk would pour out the story of his wrongs, his humiliations, his flaming resentments, his torture of soul to his one refuge—his mother who always understood.

"My son," she would say after listening to his painful confidences, "there is nothing to do—nothing. You must endure and be silent. One day you will grow up and will avenge yourself. Then you will accomplish something for Poland. But now, work, work, for you must have your education. Learn to control your feelings and be calm. It's important to give them no pretext for attacking you—for if you should be sent away from the *gimnazjum*, you could not enter at any other school. Your day will come."

He did learn to endure in silence, but there developed in him a feeling of revolt. Harsh reality was too much to bear. He would act. Ten years old, he made his decision; in five years he would be grown up and he would start a revolution and drive the Russians out of Lithuania. A child's fantasy? A dreamer's mad dream? It came true eventually.

The gaps in their education, particularly a thorough knowledge of Polish history, the Pilsudski children filled in at home. When the *gimnazjum* lessons became more difficult, their mother sat up with them till midnight or later, though she was often ill and exhausted, helping them with mathematics, drilling them in Latin, quizzing them in the odious history of Russia.

When Ziuk was eleven his father registered his name and ancestry with the heraldry office and gave him a certificate acknowledging him as a member of the nobility. His father talked with him of certain advantages this would give him, and about the duties of a noble to his partitioned country.

He had discovered the world of books and began reading a great deal. He pored over the secret Polish books brought from Zulow. Eagerly, hungrily he read about the past of Poland, about the Greeks and Romans, impressed by tales of their heroes and their struggles for liberty, about Napoleon to whom he lost his heart—like many another Pole, for more than a century.

"Everything touching my hero filled me with emotion and inflamed my imagination," he said years afterward. He read everything he could get hold of about him and his campaigns, particularly a volume called *Victories and Conquests*.

All his dreams centered around a war with Russia which he hated with his whole soul. He considered every Russian a scoundrel and a thief, and not without justification, for the basest elements were being sent to Lithuania at this time. Three Polish insurrections—why had none of them succeeded, he wondered. No books answered his question. And when he listened to people talking of 1863, he was perplexed: he knew all their own family had done and suffered, he knew of children taken to a secret grave in the forest, told the story in whispers; and now men called it a mistake. How could it be noble and splendid, and at the same time a stupidity and folly?

He read with a peculiar curiosity about the French Revolution. He was too young to understand its social background, but was thrilled by the enthusiasm and the fervor of the revolutionists, and particularly by the role played by the masses. Why hadn't the Poles shown a similar energy? He began to study their three insurrections.

32 When he was fifteen his dreams had developed into a definite task that boys could accomplish. With his brother and a lad named Witold Przegalinski he formed a club called *Spojnia* (Union). Their purpose was to educate themselves in Polish history and to defend themselves against their oppressor. They would try to find a remedy for the insults inflicted upon them. The indirect purpose was to make the members into strong characters.

Spojnia numbered forty members in several schools. Not content with learning themselves, the boys wanted to teach others and they issued an uncensored, hence an illegal paper—the first of many Pilsudski was to do. Their little publication was distributed among their friends. They started a circulating library for which they charged small fees. To raise money for books they got up amateur theatricals, and once a celebrated singer gave a benefit concert—in secret.

Their store of forbidden books was kept in the homes of three members of the club. Some boys brought books begged from their parents. Bronislas Pilsudski gave some, getting them no one knew where. Ziuk threw himself into this work without stint, with all a boy's enthusiasm, with the ardent patriotism learned from his mother. She shared their thoughts and their aspirations. Though she knew it meant running great risks, she sheltered the club's meetings in her apartment. Thus she immunized them against Russian influences.

The boys read and recited the Polish poets. One of the members of *Spojnia* remembers still how Ziuk, his eyes shining under his thick eyebrows, would say the verses about the pyramids in Egypt, ending with the line,

“Go, work, be active, because your nation is immortal.”

One thing more they did. An armed struggle with Russia would be necessary, but to fight alone was im-

possible. So the two Pilsudskis formed some clubs of workingmen in Wilno, teaching them to read and write Polish. It meant prison if they were found out. They hid it from the family lest it endanger them.

The memory of these boyish activities at the *gimnazjum* was very dear to Pilsudski in later years. He loved Wilno for its beauty and its architecture, but for another reason—because there formed and matured in his soul plans for action in behalf of Poland. No wonder he spoke of Wilno with such tenderness.

Toward the end of his *gimnazjum* years Pilsudski first heard of Socialism. It became the fashion at that time, brought to Wilno, strange as it may seem, from the east by university students returning from St. Petersburg. He read something of its theories, but was frankly bored by the vague, misty talk of the Russian books. It was all theory, flattering to Russia, but somehow not suited to an oppressed nation.

Madame Pilsudska's health was broken. She had a long illness. Though he was hard up, her husband wanted to take her south, but the doctor said it was too late. At the end of the summer of 1884 she died. She was young to die—forty-two. For her favorite son it meant the loss of a mother, of his best counselor and friend. With his grief he felt a great sense of responsibility.

All his life Pilsudski had the most tender memories of her. In a talk to his old soldiers he once put into words something of the depth and the beauty of his feelings:

Waking in fear, the child's first glance falls on its mother, bending down to caress her child, to soothe it, and smother its sobs.

I have always thought that man going down to his grave takes with him his cherished memories, to whisper to his weary head of all lasting and cherished experiences. And he will find among them one great truth. That truth is a mother's love.

34 He finished at the *gimnazjum* and passed the “matura” examinations with success. Missing the mother as the connecting link, the family scattered. From now on Jozef Pilsudski walked alone.

IV.

AT A RUSSIAN UNIVERSITY.

Pilsudski, eighteen years old, wanted to go to a technical school in St. Petersburg, but the entrance examinations were made extremely difficult for Poles. Second choice, he decided to study medicine. After the insurrection of 1830 the Russians had closed the university in Wilno, except for the school of medicine. Muraviev closed that also. Obligated then to go away, he chose the University of Kharkow in the south of Russia.

There he spent the year 1885-6, a diligent student in medicine, finding the time for history also and social science.

The year was important in Pilsudski's life not for what he gained, but for what he did not get in a first contact with Russia proper. He did not become an enthusiastic reader of Russian literature. His cursory acquaintance with novels and plays came only later. He did not become a Russian revolutionist, nor yet a Russian Socialist.

Among the university students there were many clubs—young people coming from the Ukraine, the Volga district, from the north, from Poland. There were also groups of revolutionists—Pilsudski's first association with this type.

He was invited to their meetings and went a few times merely as an observer. He listened while they read and discussed Russian socialistic books. He never joined the group and soon withdrew, for he saw clearly that

36 they were absorbed in fighting the czar and had no interest in working for Poland. The whole movement was foreign to his aim, for always he had only one—Poland's independence. That must be kept separate from Russian interests.

Yet all that winter he was reading eagerly—Liebknecht, Marx, Miot, whose theories were very popular among the students.

His acquaintance with Russian revolutionary associations gave him an idea—to organize young people in Poland along the same lines. The persecutions following the last insurrection had caused such terror and such black reaction among the Poles, the whole community had fallen into such lethargy and people were so afraid of any vital idea that when he compared his country and Russia, Pilsudski sometimes found himself actually preferring Russia—men were not so scared, not so resigned, but were spurred into action.

The active fighters for Poland's independence had died or were in prison, or in faraway Siberia, or scattered all over the world. The younger generation was depressed and apathetic, lacking any hint of the revolutionary spirit so prevalent in youth. The few who were radically inclined were filled with the Russian spirit and schemed rather to rid the country of individuals than to change the system.

A thoughtful, silent young medical student with steel-gray eyes, the university authorities watched Pilsudski carefully, suspecting him to be an enemy. Once he was arrested for six days and warned that if he took part in any revolutionary activities he would be expelled; that would mean he could not go to any other university in Russia.

At the end of the year he decided not to return. Kharkow was a small town, away from the avenues of culture. It offered little academic freedom. Looking over the field, he chose Dorpat—now in Estonia. It

was a larger place, with traditions of Polish interests and Polish culture. 37

But the plan was not carried out and 1886 saw his education suddenly ended—save what he learned by himself in later years. Instead of being a physician for sick bodies, he was to become the doctor of the soul of Poland. Thirty-five years after that brief study of medicine, the University of Warsaw gave him an honorary doctor's degree.

At home in Wilno for the holidays, he wanted to form an organization that would work out a socialistic program suited to the needs of Poles. He was the leader of a study circle whose members were St. Petersburg students and old friends from *gimnazjum* days. They had no definite plans, save to defend people from a brutal russification. They were not in touch with Socialist groups in other parts of Poland. Pilsudski mimeographed their little paper. He began making contacts with workingmen in Wilno.

With the suddenness of lightning in a clear summer sky, he and Bronislas were arrested. Charged with what? With taking part in a plot to assassinate the czar, Alexander III.

V.

AN EXILE IN SIBERIA.

The liberal czar, Alexander II, abolished serfdom throughout his dominions, yet met his death by the hands of an assassin. The accession of his son was marked, not unnaturally, by persecutions and harsh restrictions. Revolutionary organizations were dissolved, political meetings were forbidden, the reading of uncensored books became a prison offense. Yet the revolutionary movement grew and never lacked recruits.

There were a number of such groups among the university students and three men conceived the idea of federating them, to join forces against the czar's regime. They staged two public manifestations in St. Petersburg. They formed a terrorist squad—the three and twelve others—with a socialistic program, declaring that the necessary first step was to terrorize the government. They made a list of their victims—the czar, all the highest officials, the leaders of the state.

They had a spy system of their own and could always learn in advance the movements of the czar and what visits he would pay. They planned his assassination for the first of March, when he would drive from the Winter Palace along the Nevski Prospect to the anniversary service in memory of the death of his father. The imperial party was due at the church at eleven o'clock; they would throw their bombs fifteen minutes before the hour.

Six young conspirators found places in the crowd along that main avenue in the Russian capital—three to signal the coming of the carriage, and three, across the street, to throw the bombs which were hidden in the books under their arms. The czar was late. Fifteen minutes dragged by in feverish anxiety. Suddenly they heard carriage wheels, the trot of horses. At that moment the police arrested the six.

They had no definite knowledge of the plot, but were keeping their eyes on a certain student, because of a letter written to his fiancée which had fallen into their hands—a letter full of nihilistic sentiments. They saw this man with a group of his friends, there on the avenue just before the arrival of the czar, and hurriedly arrested them all. Only later, when one of the prisoners, savagely tortured, told the whole story, did they learn about the plot.

The police arrested the fiancée, the three leaders of the terrorist squad, Bronislas Pilsudski, and four others. Jozef Pilsudski was summoned as a witness. Were he and his brother really guilty?

Some meetings of young revolutionary students had been held in Bronislas' room while he was living in St. Petersburg. The manifesto of the conspirators had been printed there, a copy for each member, stating the principles of terrorism. It was a "credo" which they would produce in court when they were tried, and so get wide advertising for their theories. The first words were:

Today the emperor, Alexander III, has been punished with death by the people. But Bronislas was never a member of the party.

One of the three leaders had known him in the Russian lyceum and gave a letter of introduction to him to a young student, Kantcher, who went to Wilno to secure the materials needed for making the bombs. He was received at the Pilsudski house and as Bronislas was leaving the city, he shared Jozef's room for three

40 days. They both knew that something was being planned, but it was not ethical in Socialist groups to ask questions. They could not see how any plot in St. Petersburg could help Poland, and they were more concerned with the misery and the ignorance of the working class and the peasants than with a possible change in the government of Russia.

Jozef put Kantcher in touch with a pharmacist who provided the chemicals desired. He gave forty roubles of the hundred required, without knowing what it was for; for it was not ethical to refuse if a party member asked for help. He accompanied his guest to the railroad station and telegraphed to Warsaw friends to announce his arrival. He regretted being mixed up in such an affair, yet did his duty loyally.

It was Kantcher who was tortured and confessed.

The trial took place at the end of April before the Senate of Russia, called in special session. All the accused, fourteen men and one woman, were condemned to death; but the sentences of ten were changed to exile because of their youth—with one exception they were all about twenty.

Bronislas Pilsudski was sent to the penal settlement on the island of Sakhalin off the coast of Siberia, for fifteen years at hard labor, and was ordered to remain in that country for the rest of his life.

On the eighth of May five men were hung for this attempt against the life of the czar. Three had stood ready on the Nevski Prospect. Two were leaders of the terrorist squad. One of the latter, Oulianoff, had a younger brother who never forgave the Russian government for causing the death of these conspirators. He became the inveterate enemy of czardom, and particularly of the czar, his successor, and the whole imperial family. Later he changed his name from Oulianoff to Lenin.

Jozef Pilsudski was only a witness at this trial. It was proved that he had no part in the plot, that he be-

longed to no revolutionary party, that he had more than once argued earnestly against any attack on the czar, for a change of government was an internal question for the Russians to work out, not for Poles to concern themselves with. By administrative process he was sentenced to exile in eastern Siberia for only five years, as he was under age.

Prison in Wilno; then prison in St. Petersburg—in the same building where Kosciuszko had spent two years; a brief visit from his father there; prison in Moscow. Then he started on the long journey to the land which some Poles called “our second home” and others “hell on earth.” To many of them the journey was the worst part of the sentence.

From Wilno to Kirensk, Pilsudski’s destination, was more than six thousand kilometers. He traveled by cart, by sledge, by river boat, on foot, through marshes, forests, steppes. It took three months to reach Irkutsk, where he stayed in the prison from September to December, waiting till a party of exiles was assembled, waiting till the river Lena froze over—for there were no roads going north to Kirensk.

He was one of a group of sixteen “politicals.” The Russians didn’t find them easy to manage. At various stages of the journey there had been quarrels with prison authorities. A telegram was sent ahead ordering all officers to be polite but severe, and in case of any resistance to put them all in irons. The Russian principle was that prison must be punishment, not correction.

This group chose a leader who bought their food from the money pooled. Pilsudski had no cash, but contributed instead a gold watch—a gift from his father. They were allowed to wander about the building all day, to gather in a large room which they called the club, to read, to play chess. They had several visits—from a commandant of the police, a gendarmerie colonel, the

42 governor of eastern Siberia. There were frequent complaints which they put into writing and sent officially; one was a protest against the long delays in receiving their letters.

Still, things might have gone on smoothly and the Poles have left Irkutsk without any violent outbreak, had it not been for Cejtlik's (Sitée-leek) trouble. He was engaged to a young woman prisoner and they were allowed to meet in the prison office. One October afternoon they were talking there when the commandant entered. Cejtlik did not notice him, did not bow, did not say good-day. The Russian turned on him with gross abuse. Hot tempered, he answered back. Three days' confinement, ordered the commandant. Cejtlik ran out to tell his friends.

In a minute they were all in the clubroom, talking it over. They would not allow this order to be carried out. A prison official went with fifteen soldiers to take Cejtlik by force, but evidently wished to avoid serious trouble and called off his men. The next morning orders were sent that they were to be locked in their cells, save for a half hour's walk.

Years later, thinking over the whole affair, Pilsudski realized that this was the moment when they should have appealed to the governor of the prison and entered into negotiations with him; but young men are obstinate and hot-headed, and don't want to do the reasonable thing. They broke down the doors of the cells where some of their group were locked in—easy to do, as the locks were on the outside. All day the Russians made no move. Was it a trap, to catch them unaware? At dusk they discussed what to do. They heard the tramp of feet.

Ten soldiers entered the clubroom, with bayonets fixed. Then the commandant of police, and the prison authorities. The men were to be transferred to another part of the building. Very well, but would the

commandant promise as good living conditions? He would promise nothing. A brief altercation and he shouted, "You won't obey me? You shall obey something else then. Lieutenant, carry out your orders."

The officer drew his sword and called to his ten soldiers, "At 'em, boys—so they won't forget it!"

With rifles raised, the soldiers threw themselves upon the group of prisoners—like wolves, Pilsudski described it years later. They were crowded into the corner between stove and wall. He stood in the front row. Looking up, he saw the butt of a rifle and warded it off with his hand. As it glanced across his forehead, he felt a blow on the side of his head. A second blow. A third. He staggered, his eyes full of blood, and fainted. The unequal contest came to an end only when ten of the prisoners had fallen unconscious.

Pilsudski roused up to find himself in the courtyard, with two soldiers trying to make him stand. He broke loose and started to run toward the gate, but his legs gave way. One of the men struck him in the face with the butt of his rifle. Half fainting, he was led off to another cell. His pride, trampled on so callously, his helpless fury stifling him kept him from sleep.

In the corridor the next morning the prisoners looked at one another and saw how fearfully they had been treated. Faces were bleeding, bruised, swollen; eyes burning with fever. They looked like soldiers coming fresh from the battlefield. But they were only ten. They demanded that their three comrades be brought back. Weak as they were, they went on a hunger strike till the evening of the third day when the missing men appeared. The mutiny was over.

Not quite over. They were tried for this disturbance, charged with "armed resistance to the prison authorities," an offense punishable with penal servitude. Armed—with what? Resistance—how? It was a travesty of jus-

44 tice and the prisoners, refusing to have any part in it, gave up their right of defense. The court accepted the word of the prison officials and sentenced some of the men to six months' imprisonment each; Pilsudski and two others, under age, were given three months.

Much later, when exciting events had filled the years and he had been many times in grave danger, he could appreciate that this Irkutsk mutiny was only a trifle, an imprudent and naive act. At the time it loomed large in the life of a young man. His fists would clench whenever he looked at a soldier, even when he saw a man in uniform. He had only to shut his eyes and the vivid picture came back to him—ten armed soldiers attacking a little group wedged in between stove and wall. He learned one lesson from that event—that against brute force only one thing in the world can avail—and that is force; that it is folly to waste strength and energy in such a *melée*; that he must control himself better in the future and reach his goal by other means.

Early in December the last party for that year set out from Irkutsk. Pilsudski was assigned to Kirensk, more than a thousand miles farther north. Part of the way they went in sleighs, part way on the ice in the river Lena. None of the Poles had the necessary warm clothing and shoes. On the journey Pilsudski was closely watched, for he was now called "a dangerous political prisoner."

Kirensk was a town with about a thousand people, with no roads leading to it save the river. A safe place, said the Russians. A living tomb, the Poles described it. There was a mountain overhanging the river, and great forests surrounded the town, shutting it in. There were many pine trees, tall, straight, strong, especially beautiful when the snow lay on them.

There Pilsudski stayed nearly two years, part of the time in prison; for the authorities at Irkutsk appealed his case to the Senate and his sentence was doubled.

The prison was an old frame building, his cell had no heat when the thermometer stood at forty degrees below zero. He became ill, so ill the Russians sent him to the hospital, half dead, and he finished his prison sentence working in the hospital office; so ill that his friends took up his case vigorously and in August of 1889 he was transferred to Tunka, a warmer place southwest of Irkutsk. Every one said he would not live long.

At Irkutsk he had looked out at the forest and had gone hunting there. Tunka was entirely different—endless steppes, sandy, flat, monotonous fields and meadows. The wide view, extending thirty or forty kilometers, gave him a sense of liberty. The atmosphere of the place, so close to the Chinese frontier, was foreign, as the natives of Tunka had a distinct oriental stamp.

Pilsudski had to report frequently to the chief of police who could punish when he wished, day or night—his method of keeping a close check on his charges. An aged resident of Tunka, who remembered Pilsudski's stay there, told this incident to a Polish visitor in 1934; once he saw a Russian policeman offer his hand; one of the Poles took it—afraid to do otherwise; Pilsudski turned his back and did not see the gesture; the policeman could have put him in prison for that, or reported him again as dangerous.

During three years of his exile, Pilsudski did not draw the ten roubles a month to which a prisoner of his class was entitled—the czar's contribution to their living expenses. His family would have sent him money, but they never knew he had need of it.

Slowly the days passed—with despairing slowness, like a rosary, he described this period of a life so full of constant activity. Two things he was resolved upon—not to be overwhelmed by depression, not to get lazy. He read and read and read till he knew some books almost by heart. He reread Marx, but could not fit his

46 theories into everyday conditions in Russian Poland. He read Russian literature, still without becoming enthusiastic over the current novels and plays. He played innumerable games of chess. He taught French to the four children of the doctor in Tunka.

He did not meet many Poles in Siberia. At every opportunity he made friends with 1863 exiles. One whom he met at Tunka, had been a member of the secret Central Committee of the insurrection and had spent seven years in the most terrible of the Russian prisons—the notorious fortress of Schlüsselberg; in his memoirs written after twenty-three years in exile, he said that until he met Pilsudski he was entirely without hope of Poland's ever regaining her independence, but many talks with his young compatriot made him feel that it was possible.

Something that was of value later he gained during those years of exile. He learned the look of the countryside—in the forest, on the steppe; he acquired a sense of space; excellent training for a commander in the field. He met Russians belonging to all classes of society and to all political groups. He learned to know the Russian character, its good points and its bad points. He had a close view of the machinery of czardom and its influence on the people. Some men said, years later, that he had a better understanding of Russian psychology than the Russians themselves.

No vague illusions as to Russia for Pilsudski. Czarist Russia was barbarous—"the Asiatic monster" was one of his terms for it; revolutionary Russia was weak and fruitless. Even the Socialists of Russia were imperialists, never republicans, thinking in terms of absolutism; for them the government, whether of the czar or of something else, was always despotic. Their very ideas of freedom were not his. Later he could not make the mistake of overestimating the importance and strength of a revolution there.

Siberia gave him time to think things through. The solitude of forests and great plains gradually developed his soul. Those five years strengthened his will power and made of him an unbreakable fighter. They gave him the mentality of a leader, with a single aim: unconditional struggle against Russia and its barbarism.

The attractive theories of the Socialists talked glibly of making the workers happy. Before that was possible in Poland, the nation must be independent. Abstract theory and everyday life must be reconciled, and this made him then in exile, and all his later years in Poland, a paradoxical combination—a romantic in his goal, a positivist in the means he employed to reach that goal. Poland must reckon on her own strength. No Russian revolution, no international movement would free her. Therefore it was necessary to rouse the fighting spirit in the people themselves.

In April, 1892 his sentence was served out. Five weeks later he left Siberia, after signing an agreement not to live in any city where there was a university, for the next five years. He would be under constant police supervision.

He had not notified his family what time he would arrive in Wilno, as he was afraid of possible delays on the part of the authorities. He went from the station to the house of his sister Zofja and said calmly to the servant, "Please tell your mistress a gentleman wishes to see her." Zula looked at the stranger, but did not recognize him. He had gone away, a youth of nineteen and now returned, a man of twenty-four.

"What do you want?"

He laughed.

Then she knew who it was. She cried from sheer happiness and threw herself into his arms.

VI.

COMRADE WIKTOR.

The first years after his exile Pilsudski spent mostly in Wilno. He went out to Zulow and paid several visits, every move he made written down in the files of the Russian police.

Several excellent *partis* were proposed to him, for he was a handsome young man, of good family, well educated, able to earn more than a living as a physician, as soon as he finished his medical studies and began to practice. He refused every suggestion of marriage. He had another plan that absorbed all his interest and would brook no rival.

The summer months of 1892 he used to renew contacts with various groups and to acquaint himself with new currents of thought. He found that many changes had come during his five years away. He thought conditions were changed for the better.

1863 was fading into the distance. Estate owners had recovered some degree of prosperity. Industrial progress had greatly increased the middle class. The enormous punishment taxes, assessed on the property of Poles in Lithuania, were at last canceled. A program of loyalty to Russia and only non-political work for Poland was widely accepted. The first generation after 1863 was depressed, numb, terrorized; but that of the '90s was much more spirited. The young people, full of new hopes, began to think of some struggle. Grass grows even on graves; new life springs from ashes:

Lithuania, one vast tomb, grew green again. A new 41 movement began among the Poles.

Pilsudski had a definite plan. He knew there were noble hearts still dreaming of freedom, in spite of the prevalent pessimism and the spirit of resignation and submission. They must be organized and learn to work together. Who would risk armed resistance and open revolt? He knew there were old revolutionaries who had not surrendered their ideal of independence for Poland, but had adopted an attitude that negated every act against the government by saying, "Ours is not an epoch for vast thoughts and great tasks."

Not so Jozef Pilsudski. He saw clearly that freedom would never come save by their own efforts, and that by fighting. It would be a difficult struggle, but difficulties never deterred him when he had vowed to make his boyhood dreams a reality.

The majority of Poles were too timid, too lacking in self-confidence to adopt any plans energetically; they were fearful of repeating 1863; but the young people, not afraid to say the word "independence," were beginning to group themselves around certain leaders and to discuss and plot the recovery of Poland's freedom. Where could he find collaborators?

Not in the upper class to which he belonged by birth and training. There were few nobles left in Lithuania; they had been killed or sent into exile, or had voluntarily gone abroad to escape that fate. Decimated, impoverished, they would not be able to take up the mission of resurrecting Poland. Count this group out.

Not in the peasants. Their condition had been somewhat improved, to be sure, with the abolition of serfdom and the acquiring of land. There was constant friction between them and the landowners, fomented by the Russians. They were oppressed, they were ignorant, they were inaccessible. They did not offer Pilsudski the right environment for the development of his idea. Count that group out—for the present.

Not in the middle class. They were few in numbers, though increasing with each generation. They were too utilitarian, too much absorbed in their business, too little interested.

Remained then the working class in cities and towns. He discovered that there was a workmen's movement which was becoming radical. They were interested only in their own problems, not in national questions. Their radicalism must be "polonized," must be cleansed from foreign elements, must be given a definite aim—the independence of Poland. They must be urged to exert their new energies for this purpose. The place of the nobility was left empty. He would put this responsibility on the shoulders of the workingmen.

There remained also the young people—eager, enthusiastic, not contemptuous of dreams, wanting only a goal and a leader and they would follow loyally. Young people and workmen—here was the field he must plow and sow and water and tend, until the harvest. He began to prepare himself for this work, reading political books and history.

It was necessary to reach the Polish workmen. How? how? Impossible to call a meeting and talk to them, for ten men together meant the prompt visit of the Russian police. In the west of Europe associations and congresses were everyday affairs, newspapers and booklets could be printed and circulated freely. Why not go abroad, write and print there, and smuggle into Poland? That was not a plan for Pilsudski who said that a real leader would not live outside in safety, but would stand with his colleagues in the most dangerous position.

He must find some way to reach the masses of workmen. There must be a Socialist party in Poland—secret, since they had to deal with Russia; independent, for it must have a program fitted to Polish needs. Organizing and carrying on such a party would be dangerous

work. He must become a conspirator, risking daily, 51 hourly prison, exile again, death. Final success required that he give himself utterly to this work, body and soul. He would have no right, no time to live his own life. He must give up his family, the pleasant society to which he had entrance, for the companionship of humble workmen.

The Socialists held a meeting in Paris in 1892 and decided to organize among the Poles. The following summer the first congress of the Polish Socialist Party (called by its initials P. P. S.) was held, secret meetings in the forest near Wilno. It was definitely understood that this was to be a Polish party and that all connections with Russian Socialists were now broken. Pilsudski had never for a moment believed it possible for a free Polish nation to flourish side by side with a free Russian nation in one state. His colleagues in the new organization realized that if they were thinking only of improving the lot of the common people, the czar's government would not permit them to work in peace; persecution would come anyway, so it was worth while to risk patriotic aims in addition. In Poland the movement was unique, combining political and social problems.

August, 1893, was, as he put it, the end of Pilsudski's "legal life." From then on he was a conspirator, watched constantly by the Russian police and spies. He and his friends had always behind their backs the gendarmes, before their eyes the Citadel of Warsaw. Yet he never went armed. He was homeless, traveling frequently without a passport or with a forged one. Often he had no money and slept on a bench in the park, on the hay in field or barn. He hid in railroad cars, in a church or chapel. He roused unlimited confidence in himself, so that men never felt so free and safe as when he was sleeping under their roof, even though they knew he was on illegal business, was wanted

52 by the police. He avoided risky adventures that might result in serious damage, but in cases of real necessity his courage was unshakeable. He always hated this pretending and hiding and would have preferred to fight Russia with other weapons.

For more than six years he was nameless, because it was a strict rule of the P. P. S. that members should not use surnames. Then when one of them was arrested, questioned and tortured by the police, the most he could betray was that his colleagues were Stanislas, Ola, Marja, Pietro — never their real names. Pilsudski's party name was Wiktor, though he was also called Rom and Czartowiec (a devilish fellow). Sometimes he was Wiktor even on a passport. Many of the party members knew him as Wiktor, and learned that he was Pilsudski years later.

Nameless and homeless, he was building the foundations of an independent Poland.

The Russians frowned on all associations. Every political group was always in danger of searches and arrests. Yet in spite of violence and brute force, of dungeons and knout, the Poles did form various political parties. The P. P. S. was the special object of persecution, for the very word "Socialist" was to the Russian police like a red scarf to a bull. They were pursued like wild beasts. In other countries the Socialists were a recognized party and could have their own meetings, their own newspapers and magazines, they could send out street speakers, they could present their own ticket at elections. None of these things was possible in Russian Poland. How then spread this new doctrine of the P. P. S.—independence first, then better conditions for the working class?

Through the printed word, this being the end of the nineteenth century.

So the party set to work to organize a scheme to import uncensored, forbidden books and pamphlets, chiefly

from London where an active group of Polish exiles had gathered. The frontiers were closely guarded, with an army of officials and gendarmes and customs men and spies, but it was possible, they learned, to get things smuggled through—not only party publications, but cigars and cloth and all kinds of manufactured articles; smuggling was a regular occupation.

Pilsudski planned and set in motion a whole system of importing and distributing *bibula* (bi-bou'-wah), the P. P. S. slang term for any uncensored book and pamphlet. One member gave up a promising career in engineering and took a job as customs inspector. Another worked in a frontier factory. A third and a fourth were sent to live in that neighborhood. Soon smuggling and distributing were going on fairly successfully.

But to Comrade Witkor it was not satisfactory for long. Books and pamphlets from abroad came late. What was supposed to be news was never fresh. It was generally too international and not sufficiently local. Conditions at the frontiers were constantly changing so that it was too much to expect a systematic supply of *bibula* for very long. There was only one solution—to print what they wanted in Poland.

The P.P.S. should have its own organ—a newspaper they would call *Robotnik* (The Worker), printed and circulated in secret. The party must finance it, for it would take the place of speakers and agitators, preparing the way for organizers. Frequent government persecutions took away individuals and these gaps must be filled with new workers—an easier task if the views of the party had been popularized to the maximum. The P.P.S. congress adopted the plan and named a committee to share the editorial work. Pilsudski was given charge of the actual printing. Before long several of the committee were arrested and he was left to carry on the paper, with one assistant.

He was blamed for editing an illegal paper. How else could a new political party work, in a land where it had not the right to exist, where Poles had to speak Russian, but could not utter the least public criticism, could not have the simplest discussion; where they could not read the works of their poets unless mutilated by the censor's brutal hands, where they could not study a history of their nation unless it was falsified?

They discussed buying a mimeograph, but it would not meet the need. It was slow work so that the output was too small. Copies quickly blurred and became illegible—a serious drawback when so many of the people they hoped to reach read with great difficulty. What they needed was a press, and a press they bought in London and smuggled through the Russian lines—though many members were sceptical and incredulous, while others called it a romantic scheme or a big plan, arguing timidly, “Ours are not the times for big plans and tasks.”

It was an English press, called “model”, such as is used in small towns for printing business cards and announcements. It was set up in the back of a chemist's shop—at least, it seemed to be a chemist's shop—in a little town near Wilno and there Comrade Witkor printed *Robotnik*—number one, July 12, 1894.

They knew it would not be long before the Russian police learned of this new publication and would search for the hidden press. Pilsudski set himself a goal to reach—five numbers, for some years earlier a revolutionary group in Warsaw had succeeded in getting out five issues before their press was discovered. But the P.P.S. functioned so well that he was working on number thirty-six when his editorship abruptly ended. By that time *Robotnik* was strong enough to go on by itself.

A servant girl learned what secret work went on in the back room of the chemist's shop, and though she was sworn to secrecy and even cautioned by the priest in confession never to tell, Pilsudski thought it was too great

a risk and in six months the press was moved to Wilno—taken all apart and packed in baskets. In the summer of 1899 *Robotnik* moved again—to Lodz, a great industrial center, where it could reach its readers more promptly, where Pilsudski would not endanger his family and his friends.

The paper, the first uncensored one in Russian Poland since 1863. gave the working class something that it needed—and wanted. It never preached class hatred; instead the value of work, honor, liberty. Its aim was to rouse in the workman a sense of his dignity and strength, to rekindle the courage and faith that had wellnigh disappeared, and slowly, step by step, lead him to defy and later to fight against Russia.

“They will read it,” Wiktor would say, “when they learn that a Polish workman thinks and writes for them, the Polish workers.”

It was specially planned and written for this group of readers. There were little things that showed how men felt about it—little in themselves, but welcome signs to the busy editor. Twice groups of miners proposed giving their strike funds to help *Robotnik* along. The printers’ union in Warsaw heard that trained assistants were needed and sent this message: one of their number would go, blindfolded, in a doroshky, to wherever the secret press was; he would promise not to leave the room, not to look out of the window, once the bandage was off his eyes; he would help them with the actual printing and go as he had come—thus their secret would be kept without danger.

Robotnik did a great deal for its readers. It did something also for the whole community. Its regular appearance, its many issues amazed people. Even men who violently disagreed with Pilsudski were enthusiastic over such a bold enterprise, carried on so long under the very nose of the censors, and grateful to the person who proved that it was possible.

The leader of the National Democrats, a conservative party in fundamental opposition to Pilsudski's unchanging goal of independence, since it believed the best way to promote Poland's interests was through an understanding with Russia, sent him hearty congratulations after two years of steady publication.

"Your press and your paper are an extraordinary achievement. Your party is to be congratulated on such a fine performance. How furious the gendarmes must be getting!"

They were. Orders were issued over and over, to be more watchful, to locate the secret press and arrest all the workers. The police racked their brains and followed up every clue, but all in vain. Some P. P. S. announcements appeared in Radom. They raced to Radom to look for the press. Fly sheets were found in Bialystok. They marched to that town and searched. Some were reported at Dabrowa and the gendarmes were sure they would find the press at the bottom of a mine shaft. Wiktor must often have laughed to himself.

Gradually this work reached the point where he could see results. The printing and distributing of *Robotnik* and of many P. P. S. books and pamphlets went on regularly. The public began to believe in a party that could accomplish this. They became used to seeing it on the streets, to reading it. They even began paying for the paper and to put advertisements in its columns.

The community's whole attitude to *bibula* had changed. At first it was necessary to force forbidden books into men's hands, to urge them to read, to prove they were not endangered; for people called the mere possession of *bibula* a deed of heroism—or a folly—or a crime. Pilsudski's work made it so popular that *bibula* came to include much that had no connection with the P. P. S. or with any political party—editions of Polish poets, printed abroad, volumes of history and science.

The Socialists' experiment was followed by many illegal organizations in Russian Poland, even by those urging loyalty to Russia; they were forced to make use of *bibula* if they wanted to spread abroad some opinion. In short, *bibula* ruined the authority of the government. People knew in their hearts that it was not all powerful.

When the P. P. S. was ten years old, at the suggestion of the leader of the party in Austrian Poland, Pilsudski wrote some articles for one of the Socialist magazines in Krakow, telling the story of those early years of conspiracy through the printed word. Later they were published in book form, with the title *Bibula*. Pilsudski gives a connected picture of this side of the party's activities, to encourage their members by showing what had been accomplished, contrasting present efficiency with former halting attempts, pointing out what errors to avoid. It has something of newspaper style, but even in translation makes interesting reading today; for it is far more than a summary of Socialist propaganda work, it is a portrait of Pilsudski himself, showing him as author, critic, unfailing optimist, a lover of risk and also a lover of method and efficient organization.

Often he gives these little episodes of the struggle for patriotic propaganda a dramatic turn, particularly pleasing when he tells some adventure of his own—smuggling books with the help of a Russian lieutenant, going to visit his lady love across the frontier; running a circulating library in the apartment of a woman whose husband was a government official; having a suitcase of pamphlets stolen on the train; carriers arriving at the wrong hour or at the wrong address; the sudden death of one agent and the family's discovering a large supply of *bibula* in a locked portmanteau under the bed; the books buried in a garden, on the approach of some gendarmes, and rooted out by a pig.

When one P. P. S. man was arrested, his friends broke into his apartment which had been sealed by the police. They destroyed every document that might give a clue, then fetched Pilsudski, and all night long they sat there discussing the situation, safe from any interference because of the seals on the door.

Party workers had their own slang, in addition to the all-inclusive word *bibula*. An "inn" was a house or apartment serving as a local supply station. Policemen were called "sausages," their spies "guardian angels," frontier agents were "dogs." "The dogs are not quiet today," was a sufficient warning in the frontier zone. "To get dirty" meant a spy trailing a member; "you must keep clean," meant that a beginner was to do nothing to arouse suspicion and attract the ever-present spies. Satchels and valises were called "blonde," "brunette" or "redhead," according to their color—Zeromski's name for them. The men and women who carried *bibula*, in portmanteaus or under their clothing, were "dromedaries" and the work itself "dromedarying."

Great quantities of forbidden books and pamphlets were transported in suitcases and satchels, but when special vigilance was required there was only one way—to send them on the persons of P. P. S. members. Strong women proved to be better carriers than men, as their clothes permitted them to take a goodly amount without attracting attention. They invented a harness of metal, lined with down, that went around the waist with broad shoulder straps; this was placed next to the body, the books laid all around and tied with stout rope—the woman was in a casing of books, but with a loose coat they scarcely showed.

The "dromedaries" had to be careful not only at the frontier, but at every railroad station and in every large town. There were always spies watching, and special officials dressed in green, who had the right to stop any person and say, "Open your suitcase" or "Undo that bundle," without even a please.

The comrade in charge of an "inn" at one frontier post came under the suspicion of the authorities. It was necessary, in this emergency, to move his supply of books quickly. Five women were sent to bring them away, and a contest developed to see who could carry the most. There were some hundreds of copies of one book that weighed nearly a pound.

One woman, Marja Koplewska, whose P. P. S. name was "the beautiful lady," took seventy-five copies. So weighed down, it was cumbersome for her to walk, and very fatiguing; but she was a good soldier and walked three-quarters of a mile to the railroad station. There Pilsudski met her and they found places where she could sit in the corner and he next, for fear a chance touch give away their secret.

They had to travel all night. "The beautiful lady" dozed off, then suddenly groaned.

"What is the matter?" Wiktor leaned over her to ask.

She made no answer, but sat bolt upright, and from time to time groaned quietly. Was it because she was so uncomfortable, sitting in a jolting train in a casing of seventy-five books? He slept a little and she wakened him when the train slowed up for their station. She looked pale, her face was tearstained, she was plainly suffering intensely. She set her teeth and spoke in a low tone.

"My harness has broken. The ends of the steel are cutting into my body. How shall I walk through the station?"

"Take my arm. We'll go very slowly. Brace up, you can get as far as a doroshky."

It was hard, but she managed somehow, with his help. Once at home, she undressed and found her body bleeding and cut. It was a fortnight before she could wear her corsets again.

Later "the beautiful lady" became Madame Pilsudska.

In spite of Russian persecution all this work did bear fruit. The P. P. S. was reaching the public. At first five hundred copies of a book would last a whole year. Later if several hundred copies were sent to one "inn," prompt requests demanded more, always more. They had to print editions of eight or ten thousand copies—unheard of in the early '90s.

Bibula had won a victory for free speech, unhampered by censorship. It was a victory in the soul of the nation—a nation not made of one caste, the comparatively small group of the rich and educated, but several million people, united by language, history, by the sentiment of belonging to that nation; and most of these were workingmen.

There came a time when *bibula* totaled more books and papers and pamphlets than the censored ones. It convinced the Poles that the P. P. S. was a live organization whose work was solid and permanent and therefore worthy of support. More, it made them see, from the evidence of their own eyes, that it was possible to break the barbarous laws of Russia, that they must give up their childish belief in the omnipotence of the czar's police.

However, Wiktor's work was not easy. The party had to count its pennies. He was publisher, editor-in-chief, reporter, special writer, printer and shipper, with only one assistant. All this work was carried on in one room. Had there been no need to economize, it would still have been difficult. It was hard to buy paper in quantity without arousing suspicion; he couldn't have it delivered; he mustn't buy too often from one shop. There were many interruptions in getting out *Robotnik*—unavoidable waits when P. P. S. members came on business—for few of them could know where the press was and who was doing the work. Yet if the finished

sheets weren't ready on schedule time, the whole machinery of distribution fell down. A constant strain on Wiktor's nerves, a drain on his energy.

Years later Pilsudski wrote a detailed account of how *Robotnik* was printed in Lodz. The little English press, two feet high, was set up in his apartment at 19 East Street—today it is Pilsudski Street—in a district where workmen lived. It was an ordinary four-room apartment on the second floor, one of thousands in that city of textile mills. Beneath it was a shop selling cotton goods and stockings. He had a passport made out for Wiktor Dabrowski (Dom-brof'-skee) and was supposed to be a lawyer. Roznowski, the printing expert, passed as his secretary.

Their workroom opened off from the living room where Madame Pilsudska sat, ready to hum a little tune to announce the servant's approach. They kept the press in the upper part of a cupboard, their scant store of type in the lower part, paper under the sofa. Waste paper they burned, a little at a time, in the stove; the fire was made in the evening to make this easier. When they left off work they always had to look around to make sure the room was in good order—no scraps, no stains of ink or oil to betray them. When the maid cleaned in the morning, Madame Pilsudska stayed in the room, explaining that the master didn't like the things on his desk touched by any hands but hers; with the mistress present, no servant would dare pry about with suspicious eyes.

What a huge task it was, getting out one number of *Robotnik*! The paper had twelve small pages, about seven by ten inches. Each number had a leading article—that had the place of honor on page one; the events of the day on the last page—that must be printed last of all; so they began with the middle section. They could print only one page at a time. An hour's work gave two hundred and fifty to three hundred copies of

62 that one page, depending on how many times they had to stop. A knock at the door—Madame Pilsudska humming—the visit of a friend—some one on party business—time lost. They must think constantly about the noise. Roznowski glued strips of leather and cloth onto the press where the different parts touched; they fell off and work must stop till he replaced them. The rustling of a sheet of paper, the slight noise of the press must be hidden by the normal noise of the building and of the shop below. As it was a Jewish shop, closed on Saturdays, they could work only five days a week. Nine, ten, eleven hours a day; and one number—then nineteen hundred copies—required fifteen or sixteen days.

Because space was so limited, Wiktor had to learn to fit his writing to the inches available. Each sentence, each word even, had to be considered. This article is eight lines too long; where best cut it? what unnecessary words can be left out? then will his idea be perfectly clear and readily grasped by *Robotnik's* readers, many of whom have little education?

No more R's, the assistant reports; go over the rest of the article and change all the words with R's. What they could have done with better equipment! Yet many a newspaper, with its large staff and modern machinery, might well envy *Robotnik* its eager readers, its ever growing influence, its share in making history.

Pilsudski wrote, Roznowski set type, they both ran the little press. They would work four or five hours steadily at printing, then one would change off and be editor-in-chief while the other cut paper; for the sheets were too long and had to be cut with an ordinary knife. At last, in packages of fifty, *Robotnik* was packed into "blondes" or "brunettes" and Comrade Wiktor would take it to Warsaw, which used a third of each issue, or even to St. Petersburg, walking calmly through railroad stations crowded with police, guards and customs men.

Once printed, *Robotnik* had to be distributed secretly. They could keep no lists of readers—lists might fall into the hands of the police. They could not send it through the post. They could not write any letters about it, nor send a telegram, nor telephone. Yet the system of “dromedaries” worked so smoothly that in half an hour, at most an hour, some hundreds of papers were in the hands of their readers. In the cities it was delivered on the day of publication, or the next day. In the most remote places, within a week. So few were printed that each copy was passed on to another reader, then on, and on and on; the average was ten, and frequently one or more of the ten read it aloud to a group.

“Men will believe in the P. P. S.,” said Pilsudski, “when our paper reaches them regularly.”

One of his helpers in the work of distribution was Comrade “Edmund.” They had only two satchels, a “blonde” and a “brunette.” They had one overcoat between them and used it for a blanket when they slept out of doors. Sometimes they spent the night in a train. Often they bought no tickets.

Always in the back of Wiktor’s mind was the consciousness of danger, of being utterly helpless in the face of it, plus a sense of great responsibility. Will the police come today? Every page of *Robotnik* carried a silent threat—so many years in Siberia. Every page was to Pilsudski a stroke of the whip to czardom.

Often he lost his temper over the slow little press and would call it an old rattler, a stupid beast, a plague and a pest. Yet withal he loved it, for it carried to the workmen of Poland his ideas—and his ideals too. It was bound up with so many hopes, so much devotion and sacrifice. It was more than a machine of iron and wood, it was the heart of a revolutionary movement.

How furious the gendarmes must be getting! Year after year *Robotnik* came out. They were first annoyed, then angry at the lack of success of their large-scale

hunts for editor and press. They offered huge sums for Pilsudski's head and the discovery of the printing office. Vast gangs of spies searched for it, for its prolonged existence mocked the power of the czar.

To excuse their failure, the police insisted that *Robotnik* was printed abroad and merely smuggled in, but they had to acknowledge it was Polish made when one issue reported an item of news of the day before—impossible for the information to have been carried over the frontier and come back in print so quickly.

Legends began to grow up, among the gendarmes, among the public, about this mysterious press. People located it in cellars and attics, in this town and that. Strange noises were heard in some house—it must be the *Robotnik* press! All sorts of romantic details were circulated, surrounding it with a veil of mystery, with a halo. It was like a fairy-tale fortress or palace that suddenly disappeared from view.

Pilsudski and his assistant worked calmly on, sending out thirty-five thousand copies of the paper as well as many appeals and announcements. Regardless of party, the entire community received each number joyfully, looking on it as a triumph of Polish courage over brutal strength and stupidity.

Comrade Wiktor did not give all his time to printing for those five and a half years. As if to make up for idleness in Siberia, this was a period of intense activity. He seemed absolutely tireless. He was organizing and building up the P. P. S., the first revolutionary group in Russian Poland that lasted. He was a member of the Workmen's Central Committee at Warsaw, representing Lithuania. There were many journeys here and there on party business—all over Russian Poland, to Moscow and Odessa, to St. Petersburg to take a supply of *bibula* and carry back the money collected in the Polish group there, to Krakow and Lwow (Le-voof', better known as Lemberg), twice to London, and once to

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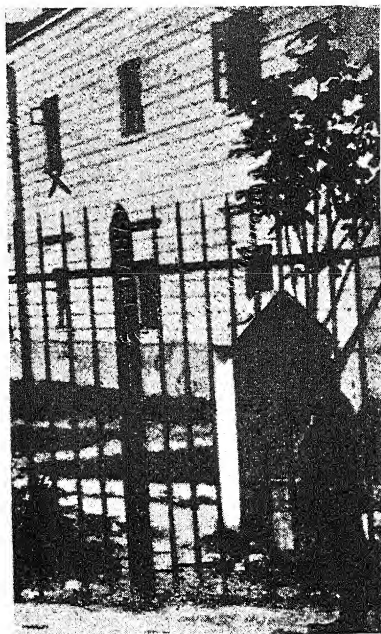
ПРИМѢТЫ:



Вѣкъ 18 1/2
 Ростъ 2 арш 1/2 вер.
 Лице чистое
 Глаза серые
 Волосы на головѣ темные
 Бакенбарды светлые
 Брови темные
 Борода темная
 Усы светлые
 Носъ обыкновенный
 Ротъ обыкновенный
 Зубы белые
 Подбородокъ круглый

Особыя примѣты: 1. Лицо чистое, въ
 2. сжатая надъ носомъ 2. Носъ
 3. темная раковина надъ носомъ

THE RUSSIAN POLICE PHOTOGRAPH AND RECORD OF PILSUDSKI, AFTER HIS ARREST IN 1887. IT DESCRIBES HIM AS A MEMBER OF THE NOBILITY, WITH GRAY EYES, HAIR AND BEARD DARK BLOND, NOSE AND MOUTH ORDINARY, CHIN ROUND; FACE CLEAR, WITH EYEBROWS JOINING ACROSS THE BRIDGE OF THE NOSE. YEARS LATER THIS DESCRIPTION WAS USED BY THE POLICE IN A SEARCH FOR HIM.



PART OF PAVILION X AT THE CITADEL.
THE CROSS SHOWS THE WINDOW OF
PILSUDSKI'S CELL—NUMBER 39.



COMRADE WIKTOR IN 1904, AFTER
HIS UNSUCCESSFUL JOURNEY TO
JAPAN. OFTEN PILSUDSKI ELUDED
THE RUSSIAN POLICE, DISGUIISING
HIMSELF BY CHANGING THE CUT OF
HIS BEARD.



A GROUP OF P.P.S. EXILES IN LONDON; PILSUDSKI WRITING AT THE TABLE;
THE MAN ON THE LEFT, SEATED, MOSCICKI, LATER BECAME THE PRESIDENT
OF POLAND

Zurich, in the Christmas holidays of 1897, where he spoke at a meeting of all the Polish organizations abroad, the gist of his speech being, "Stop your quarreling and work together," a thing he was to preach many times in future years.

He was always minister of finance for the P. P. S. and maker of the budget. He accounted not only for roubles, but for kopecks. The party's books were kept in London by a trained accountant who always said he could find no mistakes in Pilsudski's figures. He never failed to give a receipt.

"He isn't afraid of danger—nor of death," his colleagues used to say, "but he is afraid of one thing—money!"

A Polish student in St. Petersburg was invited by a friend to a P. P. S. meeting. A man came into the room and spoke to him without giving his name—therefore he must be a conspirator. He was slender, with a dark, thick beard and gray, peaceful eyes. All the others treated him with marked respect. He talked informally of a Socialist congress he had recently attended in London, often interrupted by questions. The relation between him and his listeners was like a commander's to his soldiers; the result was absolute obedience, for unconsciously they recognized his superiority.

His name, the student learned, was Wiktor. They became close friends and worked together for Poland. Happy, witty, charming in his relations with people—so the younger man described Comrade Wiktor—with a great sense of humor; never impatient, he never shouted, never despaired, never lost his nerve. Workmen and young people adored him.

VII.

CITADEL AND HOSPITAL.

February 22, 1900.

During the night hours East Street in Lodz was quiet and dark. Spies came followed by gendarmes. Number 19 was surrounded, a colonel of the gendarmerie entered with his men.

A sharp knock at the kitchen door of the Pilsudski apartment. Not the P. P. S. signal. *Robotnik's* editor had worked till half-past two, finishing an article. Then he went to sleep and wakened to find the gendarmes standing by his bed. It was three o'clock in the morning.

Almost six years Pilsudski had been waiting for these callers. The sword of Damocles had fallen. Handcuffs were snapped on his wrists. He was a prisoner in the power of the czar of all the Russias.

This was an accident, not due to carelessness or a feeling of security because they had worked so long without being discovered. A man came from Krakow on party business and Wiktor asked him to buy a supply of paper. A Russian spy recognized the newcomer on the street, followed him to the paper shop and to several other houses, back to East Street, arresting him at the railroad station. A few hours later gendarmes visited all the places where he had been and to their great surprise found that this modest apartment of Wiktor Dabrowski (so the passport read) was the printing office they had hunted for so long.

No need to search. There was the little press, with a page set up and partly printed. Number thirty-six of *Robotnik*. It was to be published on the twenty-fifth of the month. The gendarmes looked at the press with something of admiration and respect in their faces. One man touched it with his hand curiously, as if wondering how an object two feet high could be so important and make sport of them for so long a time.

The colonel of the gendarmes dictated his report, one sentence that struck the P. P. S. like lightning. He picked up a printed sheet and glanced over it. It contained Pilsudski's leading article announcing that the Socialists in Krakow were planning to publish a newspaper of their own, for the Austrians had abolished press censorship. It bore the title, "The Triumph of the Free Word." It began:

Orlow, chief of the gendarmes of the czar, Nicholas I, once said to an acquaintance who was starting westward on a journey, "Will you do me a favor? When you reach Nuremberg, please go to the monument of Gutenberg, father of printing, and spit in his eyes. From him comes all the evil in the world."

"Aha! Gutenberg!" exclaimed the colonel of gendarmes. "Yes, yes, as you see, all evil in the world comes from him."

The Triumph of the Free Word—at that moment did his title sound ironical to the author? He stood by with chained hands while the gendarmes packed the press in a basket and sealed it. Many times its slowness had irritated him, its noise had been a constant danger, yet now watching the sordid, foul hands of the police touching it, his heart ached as if the coffin lid were closing on some one very near to him.

He made one request—to be permitted to take along a copy of Slowacki's works, his favorite poet since boyhood, his first teacher in democracy. The colonel refused.

68 They took him first to the prison in Lodz, "a dirty hole," as he described it, which he thought extremely unpleasant. He had a tiny cell without any furniture. The food was disgusting. He could not smoke. It was a relief when in March he was transferred to Warsaw.

After the insurrection of 1830 the czar built a fortress-prison on the outskirts of Warsaw. Its guns looked threateningly down on the city, not to defend it, but to be always ready to destroy it, should another insurrection break out. It was a huge place, covering acre after acre along the Vistula, surrounded by high brick walls and divided into sections by cross-walls and formidable gates. There were barracks, seven in a row; eight and nine were added later; the next building was accordingly numbered ten—Pavilion X, ominous words to Polish ears, for it housed the so-called "dangerous political prisoners."

It stands there today, close to the river, a white, two-story building forming three sides of a square. The fourth side was formerly a high wall with iron spikes at the top. It had room for six hundred prisoners, but on the occasions when the Russians arrested wholesale, many men were crowded into one cell. Some rooms have the original doors, with little square openings made with slanting sides so that the guards in the corridor could see the whole of the cell, but the prisoner looking out saw only a few inches.

Pilsudski was taken first to the office for questioning. Perhaps unwittingly the Russian captain paid him a great compliment.

"I don't suppose," he commented after finishing his inquiries about the press, "there's a workman in Warsaw who hasn't had your newspaper (*Robotnik*) in his hands on some occasion. Our discovery in Lodz will be a blow to the party. It won't be easy to organize anything like that again."

"But, Captain," said the new prisoner with a smile, "I am quite sure the next number of *Robotnik* is being printed at this moment. Believe me, that represents no great difficulty for the P. P. S."

Bravado and bluff? Not at all. Pilsudski knew his colleagues. He was right, but only later did he learn the details—that one of the party members by chance knew in a general way what number thirty-six was to contain; that it was printed in London, substantially the same issue that had been rudely interrupted at Lodz, and smuggled into Poland; "printed in a little secret office," it stated, "all the work done by inexperienced, idealistic workers for the party." Thirty-seven too was done in London, the following numbers in Kiev where the P. P. S. rented an apartment in a building where the chief of police was living. What a few years before had seemed an extraordinary enterprise, a plan that made people tremble, had ceased to be so difficult and so terrible. After eight months *Robotnik* was moved to Riga and in 1905 to Warsaw where it was printed in a corner house on Nowy Swiat, the main street, by that time on a modern electric press that could do thirty thousand copies.

The captain at the Citadel allowed Pilsudski to wear his own clothes, to have his luggage in his cell, to smoke, to send out to the city for almost everything—even for wine or beer!—the treatment given to officers—but asked him to take off his tie. A strange request that made him smile as he obeyed it. Then with gendarmes in front of him and gendarmes behind him, he was escorted to his cell—number thirty-nine, at the end of the corridor on the second floor. It was a long corridor with a dozen cells, one soldier on guard, one gendarme walking up and down.

Thirty-nine was a large room as prison rooms go, with gray walls, badly white-washed, and a dark cement floor. There was one low window with a table by it, covered

70 with grease and dust; a wooden stool; an iron bed sagging in every line; and pervading everything that musty smell peculiar to rooms long unaired but always used. Here he was to live from March to December.

After the tiny cell and the discomforts at Lodz, thirty-nine seemed like a spacious hotel room—a mediocre one, to be sure, but still a hotel. He could move the furniture about, putting bed and table and stool in one corner or another—he liked any cell that gave space enough to do that. He disliked the restrictions on his liberty and the constant observation of the guards. Sometimes he would try to deceive his warder, if only for a moment, by breathing on the glass in the door, or hiding in the corner, or pressing himself as flat as paper against the wall.

He had felt elated on entering the Citadel, for the place was so closely bound up with the story of Traugutt and other Polish martyrs. Of course he found the days monotonous and endless—that was true of every prison—but there came at long intervals red letter days when he was summoned for an examination. The Citadel was a better place than some. Russian prisons ruled their inmates through fear and terror; force and violence were the rule; yet many things strictly forbidden elsewhere were admissible here, so that he described it as the gayest prison he ever lived in.

He studied languages which he had never particularly liked during his years at school. He took up a new one—English—and without a teacher he puzzled over the strange words and queer expressions, pronouncing them by guess work as if they were nonsensical Polish words. He mastered the language, but with a faulty pronunciation which he was never able to get rid of later. He described it, long afterward, as toiling and moiling at English, committing a crime against himself, and declared that he would never have had the courage to learn languages while he was free.

In 1925 Pilsudski gave a lecture for the benefit of former political prisoners, which he called "The Psychology of the Prisoner." Much of it was autobiographical. He claimed, with all due modesty, to speak with a certain authority, as he had passed through many prisons and spent more than one year behind bars. Indeed if a statistician were to add up all the prisons and all the years of imprisonment and divide the total by the sum of the Polish population, he would find Pilsudski's share greater than the average.

In Poland with its long years of political persecution a prison sentence carried no stigma of disgrace; it meant some patriotic service which had, unfortunately, been discovered by the police or spies. Pilsudski felt it necessary to make this clear to the younger generation, growing up after the war and the rebirth of Poland. Had not he himself come straight from prison to be made Chief of State?

Poland is perhaps the only country where it is still possible to speak freely about such a derogatory subject as jail. A hundred and fifty years of history have made it a daily factor in the everyday life of the people. It was a part of the general culture of Polish life. Decade after decade, one generation after another familiarized itself with imprisonment as an everyday occurrence penetrating human thought, as it has been penetrated elsewhere by problems of another nature.

He might have quoted the popular saying, "Show me the Pole who has never been to prison, and I will show you an arrant coward." Instead he quotes Mickiewicz:

Literature is the reflection of life and the small black letters set down on paper are an evidence of that which filled the existence of many millions of men. One of our greatest poets, in his beautiful verses addressed to the Polish mother, wrote:

Twine from the first your infant's neck in chains,
Teach it to breathe foul and damp air.

Anything of this kind would have been impossible elsewhere, but in Poland these sentiments were forced into the

feelings of every mother, thinking of the future of her child. I cannot therefore be taxed with exaggeration by the present generation if I mention prison as an everyday event.

Then touching on the unpleasantness of living always in a small room under ever-watchful eyes, he told of the prisoner's struggle to create for himself something independent of any outsider—perhaps the hardest phase of imprisonment.

To create life—but from what? From oneself, from one's own resources, to create a life under such abnormal conditions, to create it alone, without assistance, seeking to find by some means or other the source of that which I call "the luxury of prison."

This consists in the mental creation, out of one's own resources, of something which is necessary for oneself alone, and which is independent of those who have cast one into prison. When a man seeks for material to achieve this end, he finds that he is so limited in means, so restricted in methods, that he almost gives up the attempt. The hands have nothing to do. There are no tools available to make anything. Material things are so limited and so insignificant that the mind gropes with difficulty for something to which to cling.

He emphasized this necessity for seeking a life outside of prison conditions, of creating a luxury for oneself alone, which is a psychological necessity of nearly every prisoner, and went on philosophically:

I always jokingly held that I was a born prisoner, because it was easy for me to reconstruct the charm of life. I could evoke in my soul extraordinary dreams and ideas, solely because my mind worked easily in this direction. I could fight against prison conditions with my lively and vivid imagination. I was able to create my own life of thought, a life of dreams, a life of illusions in which I had freer rein than was possible in everyday life. One is conscious of no restraint when one ignores the jailer's watchful eye. I was then able to create in myself everything I required, for time was not lacking.

He cited instances of Polish prisoners who worked at languages, who studied the grasses in a prison courtyard, or with scanty material worked at statistics, to put up a defense against the poison of prison.

I concentrated my investigation on the highest genus of the fauna—man. I noticed immediately all the warders, every

movement of their muscles, every change of expression. How many delightful moments I spent in the Warsaw Citadel, which was so badly designed acoustically that it was possible to hear from the cells every word spoken in the corridors—just as if the place had been specially built to facilitate the examination of the warders and not of the prisoners! I spent hours listening to the conversations of the warders and examining their psychology. I sought the enemy in order to understand him. The scope of observation was limited, but all the more vivid.

I do not know if any other prisoner will confirm my words, but I consider that the hearing of prisoners is extra sensitive. They catch the slightest sounds; they seek "particles of life;" they are transformed almost into mice which are sensitive to the slightest rustle.

After a brief comparison of Russian and German prisons, the lecture ended with a return to its beginning.

For a long period of time prisons formed a part of Polish culture. This is a sad admission, but there is a certain charm and fascination about it.

The power of prison to create a new life is undoubtedly great. A new prison man is born, a man created by his own might, by his own strength of soul, transformed into a diamond which cuts the hardest objects.

During a hundred and fifty years prison psychology was something that was deeply felt by people in Poland. There was hardly a man who, on looking back at the Polish life of the old days, did not come into contact with a prison, did not speak about a prison, and did not come near a prison. During those hundred and fifty past years, those hundred and fifty long years, so many years that the oldest man is not able to remember them all, there has not been a single prominent movement where prison has not been the companion of the life of the Pole from the cradle to the grave. Every one spoke of prison as of a living part of his soul.

I frequently ask myself if all those prison experiences of Poland, with all their sacrifices and heroism, with all the charm of the torment of the human soul detained in abnormal conditions, garrotted, beaten, tired out, and yet prompt to rebel, if this charm is not one of the characteristic traits of our generation. When I think of this, when I gaze on the eyes of children and young people, living under happier conditions than ours, I ask myself if the time is not far off when those verses which caused our hearts to beat in times past, will not be read and recited in schools as something strange and distant, which will be passed over in the same manner as we passed over and disregarded the beauties of Greek poetry when they were forced upon us.

Prison life, he summed it up, was not without its value for those who passed through it with rebellion and fight in their souls, who created from themselves and

74 their sufferings the Polish culture which is now passing. It had a force, but also a charm.

We, the people of the prison era, are fading into the past. A new generation is rising, a generation which will soon be alien to us, as its lips have never quaffed that cup of mingled bitterness and delight. I see the eyes of children wide open with surprise at the idea that there could have been times when prison, that is to say something that is a humiliation for a man, crushing him to the ground, could awaken in us a spark of enthusiasm, to light the fire in our eyes and bring smiles to our lips.

However, as a prison man, I always think of those who are coming after us without anxiety. May they forget us, forget our struggles and sufferings, may they advance to a new life where the charm of prisons will not bring a smile to the lips nor poison to the heart. May they freely forget us in order to create a new life.

Meanwhile the P. P. S. was busy. The finding of the press made the members less sad than the arrest of Pilsudski. They trembled at the thought of the fate awaiting him. First they set about arranging for a new press so that *Robotnik* could go on. Their second task was to get their leader free. Somehow, somehow this must be accomplished. Many were the discussions held, many were the plans considered. On one point they were all agreed at the outset—escape from the Citadel was impossible; if a prisoner should succeed in escaping from one building, he could go only a few yards and then was stopped by a high gate, closely guarded day and night. There were more guards on the top of the walls, guards by the river, guards everywhere. Tunneling? Every generation at the Citadel dug tunnels under the prison walls and the guards filled them up with complete indifference and they were dug again; but no one could get away by that method.

The Russians were in no hurry to bring prisoners, even very important political prisoners, to trial. They could not escape, they were not allowed out on bail. The P. P. S. wanted to get Pilsudski's trial postponed. Once he was sentenced, things would be more hopeless than ever.

He was accused of four different acts, in four cities. His punishment would be, at the very least, eight or ten years in the far northeast of Siberia, at Kolymsk perhaps, a place much more remote than Kirensk and with a much more disagreeable climate; and now he would be at hard labor. If he lived to serve out the sentence, he would be broken in health and would have to spend the rest of his life in Siberia.

The P. P. S. must organize his escape. If it was impossible at the Citadel, then he must be transferred to another place. How? Illness perhaps; some illness that couldn't be treated in his cell or in the Citadel hospital.

There was in Warsaw at that time a secret society of Poles that cared for prisoners at the Citadel. Its most important work was finding ways to communicate with them and tell them how to act at their trials. Sometimes they could send a cake with a slip of paper baked into it; but Pavilion X prisoners were not allowed to receive any food from outside. Sometimes a book was sent, with underlined words or letters that made a code; but only new and uncut books could be sent to Pavilion X. There was a third device—sewing slips of paper into garments for the prisoner; but special permission was necessary before a Pavilion X prisoner could receive a suit of clothes or underwear, and this took a very long time, if indeed it was granted in the end. Visits of friends or relatives? Very few callers were allowed in Pavilion X, and when they were admitted, they could talk to the prisoner only in the presence of gendarmes, through two gratings, half a meter apart.

But when cakes and books and clothes and visits all failed, Marja Paszkowska (Pash-koff-skah), a member of the society, had a last resource—Alezei Sidelnikow (See-del-neé-kof). He was a Russian who served as warder at the Citadel for twenty-seven years. He had snow white hair and kindly, warm, blue eyes. He

76 was a simple man, upright and noble, with a surface loyalty to czardom, yet feeling in his heart a certain sympathy with the ideal motives of his charges, a certain pity for them. He often spoke of them as "these noble and unhappy people." Though he knew the terrible punishment that would be meted out to him if he were discovered, he supplied a complete list of all the prisoners at Pavilion X for every issue of *Robotnik*; the gendarmes were furious, but never discovered how the paper got such accurate information. He never refused little favors to Madame Paszkowska, such as carrying cards to prisoners and from them to her—cards that apparently bore only some family news or a few words of encouragement and comfort. A card or two, he would say, would never permit a man to escape from the Citadel.

The warder would go into a cell and put down his cap, or his matchbox if he lighted a cigarette. Something in his eyes told the prisoner there was a message for him, in the box or under the band of the cap. He would go on to another cell and later return to pick up his belongings—not the same box, but another the prisoner had ready for him, with messages for his family or for party friends.

Some of the notes from cell thirty-nine, written on the red paper of cigarette boxes, traveled to the Polish exiles in London. One was a rhyme describing the visit of the gendarmes to the printing shop in Lodz. That allayed their anxiety, for it showed his state of mind.

Madame Paszkowska went to consult a noted Warsaw doctor who, though not a member of the P. P. S. himself, knew something of the work Pilsudski had been doing and appreciated it. He agreed to help and dictated to her instructions which were relayed to Pilsudski through Sidelnikow. "Pretend madness," was the message he received one day. Detailed suggestions followed, changed from time to time.

The sympathetic warder reported the progress of the strange mental illness of number thirty-nine. He seemed to be afraid of the gendarmes, indeed of any one in uniform, and would not allow them to come into his cell. He refused to eat any food they brought him.

Did his mind perhaps go back to the mutiny in the prison at Irkutsk, when for long afterward the very sight of a Russian uniform made him clench his hands? Or to the dissimulation he had been forced to practise in the Wilno *gimnazjum*?

This "unhappy person," Sidelnikow told the Polish lady sadly, had stopped eating. Once he had taken the dinner plate from the hands of a gendarme and thrown plate and all on the floor of his cell, crying out confused words no one could understand—something about the food's being poisoned. He would eat only eggs, and eggs only if they were hard boiled and brought to him in the shell. Sometimes he ate shells and all. After many days eggs had become distasteful, and finally he consented to eat some chocolate that was given to him wrapped, and a package of little cakes.

Poor Sidelnikow was blamed by the authorities for not feeding this important prisoner properly. He talked it over with his wife who purchased a Lithuanian cookbook and herself prepared dishes for Pilsudski, following its recipes. But Lithuanian *barszcz*, the wine-colored soup made from beets, and strawberry compote he refused as he had refused the everyday prison fare. They sent to the officers' casino for Strasburg *pate de foie gras*. He merely shook his head.

It might be hard for many persons to refuse food and keep it up for long, but this was the least of Pilsudski's testing. It sounds comparatively easy, pretend madness. It sounds harmless enough. But no one can measure the nervous energy required. It meant playing with madness. It was the most dramatic and at the same time the most terrible period of his life.

To be on guard every minute, day and night; to be ready with the right reaction to this situation or to that one; to give the necessary facial expression, and to give it almost automatically, without time to think and adjust nerves and muscles; to be wakened up suddenly from sound sleep by the flashing of the guard's lantern, and to wake always under absolute control, in that very half-second, so that the mask of insanity would never slip and betray the real man underneath—nine men out of ten would go mad in reality, in six weeks or less of such self-torture.

More than once Pilsudski wondered if that would happen to him, as days grew into weeks and weeks into months. The constant strain, the lack of food, added to his imprisonment began to leave telltale traces in his face. He looked badly, almost worn out. The Russians became alarmed about their famous prisoner. Even the gendarmes wanted him to stay sane, because they were hoping to make a reputation from this case. Little opportunity for that if instead of convicting the long-sought-for editor and publisher, the court could only sentence an insane man who was not responsible for what he did.

The Citadel authorities watched him closely to make sure he was not pretending madness. They went into his cell unexpectedly, they woke him up in the night, trying to catch him unawares. Once a high official visited him. Pilsudski did not feel quite sure of himself, so he looked at the Russian and began to laugh—the meaningless, empty, hideous laugh of an empty mind. He was a good actor and absolutely convinced that official who had thought him shamming. He convinced the prison doctor too. Concentrating, using the last atom of his will power, he could make froth appear on his lips. But he paid a high price.

While the man in cell thirty-nine played his role, the work of rescue went a step farther. Madame Pasz-

kowska went to Dr. Ivan Sabasznikow (Sah-bash-neé-kof), a specialist in mental cases, who came from Siberia and so lacked the russification tendencies of most Russians living in Poland. She told him a moving story—that Pilsudski, the companion of her childhood, was in such a nervous state his relatives feared for his sanity. The Citadel doctor was not experienced in such matters, and the authorities would not permit a Polish doctor to be called in. Would he go to examine this prisoner?

The doctor grew interested and told her just how to proceed. A petition was sent to the authorities, signed by an aunt of Pilsudski, asking them to permit Dr. Sabasznikow, whom she had known in St. Petersburg, to examine him. The Citadel officials were impressed by this, as the doctor was a physician of importance whose visits were expensive. They could not know that he had refused any fee for this case. They gave the necessary permission.

In the company of the Citadel doctor Sabasznikow went to cell thirty-nine. Pilsudski became violently excited at the sight of the doctor's uniform, so much so that the visitor asked to be left alone with the patient. Before many minutes had gone by he was sure that the prisoner was pretending madness. Pilsudski saw that he knew and ceased to pretend. A chance reference to Siberia started them talking. The doctor loved that country and longed to return. His five years there had by now taken on a poetical color in Pilsudski's memories. They talked for an hour, discussing the natural beauties of the country. They were charmed with each other.

The specialist thanked Madame Paszkowska for introducing him to Pilsudski whom he described as a man with so rich a soul and so remarkable a personality. It had been one of the most charming hours of his life. He was convinced that if this playing with madness continued, it would be only a question of time till the man

80 would really go insane. He was greatly impressed by his immeasurable energy and determined to help him.

He gave the lady a copy of his report. The diagnosis, written in Latin, said that the prisoner was suffering from *psychosis hallucinatoria acuta*. "His psychological state is dangerous and serious," it went on; "it has been created by his environment and the bad conditions of life in Pavilion X. In normal conditions he should return to normal health." It concluded with the suggestion that the prisoner be sent to his private sanatorium for further observation and treatment.

The Citadel authorities discussed this report. The doctor was a Russian, with no reputation of being friendly to Poles. They wanted this famous prisoner sane, so they must take good care of him. But Warsaw was full of his friends. A private house and the insane asylum in the city were alike too difficult to guard closely. They decided to take him to St. Petersburg where there was a large institution for the criminal insane. The journey was made in December. On the same train went a devoted P. P. S. friend, to oversee at that end the plans for his escape.

The asylum of St. Nicholas the Miracle-worker was a large gray building, four stories high, surrounded by a high, prison-like wall. It had two entrances, one by the river, the other on a little side street, with porters watching the gates day and night. There were rooms for two thousand patients.

The P. P. S. students in St. Petersburg were a small, very active organization. They had feared the party would go to pieces after the arrest of the leader, since all the threads were in his hand. The five who were to arrange his escape took up their task with energy and enthusiasm—a task of great honor and also great responsibility.

Plan after plan was discussed. Why not use the Polish housekeeper at the asylum? Wasn't there a Polish

doctor on the staff? Neither suggestion proved practical. They settled on Mazurkiewicz (Mah-zur-ka'-veets), one of their members, who was just then taking his examinations at the end of his medical course. Get him appointed to the asylum of St. Nicholas.

But Mazurkiewicz had other plans. He had been studying to become a specialist in skin diseases and was going to practise in Lodz, and at the same time do some political work for the party among the textile mill workers. He wasn't interested in mental cases. However, party orders were strictly obeyed in that little St. Petersburg group. Mazurkiewicz was not the first—nor the last—to alter his life plans to serve Wiktor, as they called the charming man who used to come to their students' meetings and walk about the room, cigarette in hand, winning all their hearts by his personality and his unconscious strength.

Mazurkiewicz's father had a wide circle of acquaintances and was able to secure from the director of the asylum an appointment for his son who had to begin as an assistant. By then it was the end of March. The young doctor joined the staff to see just what the situation was and study the details.

The ceaseless strain of pretending had been too much, even for Pilsudski. He decided that he must stop this feigned madness and told the doctors that he was quite normal. They considered that a sure proof that he was insane and kept him for further observation.

The director took a liking to the young assistant and occasionally talked with him about an interesting case. One day he pointed to a door with a glass panel giving a view of its occupant and said, "This is the editor of *Robotnik*. He is all right, he's stopped pretending. His case may drag on indefinitely—or they may take him away any day. They wanted me to have armed gendarmes watch him!" That was Mazurkiewicz's first view of the man he was to rescue.

Slowly, how slowly it must have seemed to the P. P. S. group and to the prisoner as well, plans were worked out. One at a time, in the doctor's bag, articles of clothing were brought for Pilsudski and hidden in the laboratory—underwear, a suit, shirt, a folding opera hat, because that took up less room; they had to be smart clothes so that the guards would think him an important visitor. Meanwhile rumor said a spy had arrived at St. Nicholas.

At last a second appointment came for Mazurkiewicz—as doctor. That meant he would be given night work. The date was fixed for the first of May (in the Russian calendar), because that was his first night duty and because it was a holiday and some of the hospital servants would be gone.

He had learned that sometimes a doctor could have a patient brought to his room for examination. About eight o'clock on the evening of May first he made his rounds, chatted a moment with Andrew, the attendant, and motioning to Pilsudski's room, said, "That's a very curious case. I want to examine him again. Bring him down to me in half an hour."

Waiting in his room, Mazurkiewicz began to doubt the whole procedure. He thought of his Lodz plans—of possible danger to himself—of his mother. Wiktor was weak. Perhaps this last twenty-four hours had been too much for him and he was already insane. If he should burn these clothes and later say to his P. P. S. friends that escape was useless, since Pilsudski could never do any more work for the party, who would be the wiser? Madness was only a day off, or two, or three.

He thought of the long corridor they must pass through, of the servants in the courtyard, the porter at the gate, the drive in the carriage that was to be waiting for them, the train trip to Riga—so many chances for some slip-up, could they possibly do it and win through? But if he stayed there quietly and did nothing at all,

Wiktor would soon be really insane; his nerves were almost at the breaking point; and he himself would be responsible. True, it might never be discovered, but all his life he would know. Suddenly he felt sure he was doing right. Pilsudski must be saved, not be left buried behind the high walls of that asylum. St. Nicholas the Miracle-worker—was it a miracle that was going to be performed now?

Andrew brought the patient to the doctor's room and was told to come back in an hour. His eyes were sunken under the bushy eyebrows. He looked fifty instead of thirty-three. He had played his part with the last reserves of his energy. Now, without speaking, he changed from his hospital clothes to the others. In ten minutes he was ready. The opera hat was too large and fell over his eyes. Never mind, he would carry it in his hand.

They had tea and smoked some cigarettes. The moment for action came. They started along the corridor, but when the doctor saw a stranger near the main entrance they turned, went out at the side door and crossed the very long courtyard, where some servants and their families were standing about chatting. They chatted too—at least, Mazurkiewicz made a point of speaking when they passed people, even using the name of another doctor. The guard who had come on duty only a half hour before and could not know but that a caller had come earlier, noticed Mazurkiewicz and his friend, a smartly dressed man. He opened the gate and saluted. They were out on the street!

Near the main entrance two P. P. S. men were waiting, armed. They had a long wait, as did the coachman stationed there. Prisoner and doctor found a cab presently, one with an old horse, so weak he couldn't go out of a walk.

"You ought to be driving corpses!" the impatient Mazurkiewicz protested.

84 "No, no, let him go slowly," Wiktor interposed. "See how green everything is. How nice it smells!"

He had waited for so long, a few minutes more did not matter. They changed to another doroshky with a good horse and drove to the apartment of some friends in the party. They were anxious for Pilsudski not to stay long. Dressed as a customs official, he traveled from St. Petersburg to Reval and Riga and so down to Kiev. That was still in Russian Poland, but he wanted to stop there to see his beloved child, *Robotnik*. He went straight to the apartment where the paper was being printed. How had they been carrying on, this year and more he'd been away? He helped to print one page. He slept on the table and when the deaf servant was coming into the room, his friends hid him in a dark storeroom. After a few days' rest, they started him on, anxious to get him over the frontier into Austrian Poland.

Madame Pilsudska joined him at the cathedral in Zamosc. They spent a night with one of Count Zamoy-ski's employees, saying they were on their way to visit a relative, the administrator of the Zamoyski forests; he was a P. P. S. man who had long been a smuggler of *bibula* there. Then with fresh horses and a trusty peasant, they drove on through the Zamoyski estates toward the frontier, Pilsudski wearing a forester's cap. The coachman's interest was gained by the story that they were going to Lwow to be married.

Dr. Mazurkiewicz meanwhile had spent some days in a house in the forest near St. Petersburg. Then disguised with an official's cap, he went by train to the Zamoyski estates. Once he had to wait at a railroad station. A P. P. S. man who was an engineer calmly unlocked the czar's waiting room and brought him coffee so that he was undisturbed.

Pilsudski's escape was soon discovered at the asylum. The wildest stories were circulating among the people,

Poles and Russians alike, and in the press. One said that he had fled on a Swedish ship and on his arrival at Stockholm the king gave a great banquet in his honor. A dare-devil rascal, was the Russian comment. Some of the prison doctors still insisted that he was mad.

With his wife and Dr. Mazurkiewicz Pilsudski crossed the frontier into Austrian Poland and was safe from the czar's police. Twenty years later prisoner and rescuer met in the Polish capital, the one professor of mental diseases in the University of Warsaw, the other Chief of State.

VII.

BOJOWKA AND BEZDANY.

In Lwow there was no immediate danger of arrest, but Pilsudski's P. P. S. friends were anxious and urged him to go to England. That meant safety; they could print and distribute their paper, they could meet in coffee houses and talk openly, with no fear of spies.

The Polish exiles in London thought, when Wiktor and his wife arrived there, that he actually looked better than before his arrest. He seemed less tired and could walk a long distance. Was it possible for a man to leave the Citadel and the asylum of St. Nicholas the Miracle-worker in better health than at his entrance?

His friends gradually ceased calling him Wiktor. It could do no harm now to use his surname. His wife used his old nickname, Ziuk, and his closest friends took it up.

In London the Pilsudskis lived in one room, next the office where the editorial work of the P. P. S. was carried on. He tried to rest and gave only two lectures, but he would not stay in England. He insisted on returning to Poland to go on with his work. Early in 1902 they settled at Krakow, a convenient center where he could easily keep in touch with all the party activities, near enough the Russian frontier so that he could slip back into Congress Kingdom.

Krakow was a center for other groups too—for the National Democrats, a party very conservative and non-Socialist; and for the party of Socialists who were inter-

national rather than Polish in their aims, putting all the emphasis on social questions, some of them urging close cooperation with their groups in Russia with the hope of securing autonomy or federation. Not all Poles thought alike, not all Socialists thought alike—the cause of frequent and serious misunderstandings.

In Krakow the Pilsudskis lived in two rooms, with borrowed furniture. At this time, as often before and afterward, he had little money; but luxuries, comforts even, meant nothing to him in comparison with the work in hand. He never missed them. He never had any personal worries, but there came times when he was anxious about the lack of organization in the party, and anxious about money for its many needs.

For the next twelve years Pilsudski lived in Austrian Poland—in Krakow, in Lwow, in Zakopane (Zah-ko-pah'-ne), in a mountaineer's hut or in a little *pension* that was a P. P. S. headquarters. The two and a half years following his escape from prison were a second time in his life when on the surface he was most inactive, like a field lying fallow. It was a period of internal evolution, like the Siberia years, when he read much and meditated much. He carried on routine party business, organized Socialist congresses, put the P. P. S. affairs in order, and traveled about here and there—often in danger as he had no passport, or a false one.

Three months of the winter of 1902-3 he and his wife spent in Riga, living in the household of two school teachers. The Russian police were watching the Lithuanians, the Latvians and other groups, but apparently did not suspect the Poles. It became for the time a center of P. P. S. conspirators.

One of these teachers was extremely interested in the work, though not a member of the party. Her conservative relatives and friends were very suspicious about some of her acquaintances, without having any definite facts to base their objections on. Frankly they would

88 say to her, "We like you, Marja, but—what about your queer friends? We feel very doubtful."

One evening the two ladies and the Pilsudskis were at supper when visitors arrived—Marja's cousin and his wife, come to invite her to the races the following day. She went into the hall and nervously, hurriedly thanked them, but said she couldn't possibly take the time to go to the races, as she was unusually busy, with many papers to correct. All the time she was hoping they'd leave at once, as Pilsudski was in the dining room.

But at that moment her friend came into the hall and cordially asked them to supper. They accepted and were introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Jankowski, as the passport was made out. Pilsudski was at his best and his best was very fine indeed. He was always a delightful conversationalist and that evening he held the attention of the group. He talked about traveling, about London which he had recently visited. The callers stayed for an hour and on leaving said, "Well, Marja, if all your queer friends were as delightful as this Mr. Jankowski, we'd not say a word against them."

Then came 1904 and the outbreak of the Russian-Japanese war. The Poles were taken by surprise. Pilsudski thought the time for decisive action had come. Mobilization of Poles must be prevented, for they had no interest in this war and ought not to fight for czarism, their oppressor. Wasn't it better to resist at home than to die in the far east? Up to this time he had always argued against useless action that could not have any practical results, but now was the time to strike.

To carry out this plan he went to St. Petersburg, then to various cities in Congress Kingdom, and put his idea before leaders among the Poles. He soon learned that the community did not share his views, they would take no active steps, they would do nothing. They may

have had hopes, but they were absolutely passive. They answered that death in the east was not a certainty, that no one wanted to repeat the folly of 1863. When he said, "This is Poland's opportunity!" they replied with a spirit of caution. Bitterly discouraged, almost ill, he went back to Krakow.

"Where," he wrote to a friend, "are the Poles of the historic songs? Where are the knights and the heroes dreamt of by my mother, those men of proud, flaming hearts, ready to seize their arms at the first call in the struggle for liberty?"

He made then a second plan. Perhaps his countrymen would respond to the stimulus of foreign help. Russia was fighting in Manchuria, the Poles lived in the far west of the czar's empire. If a revolution could begin in Russian Poland, so that the czar's forces must be divided, something might be accomplished. Would Japan give the funds needed? There was some discussion with a Japanese military attaché in Vienna, then the matter was talked over at great length in London, and he decided to go to Tokio to see the Japanese General Staff.

He set off in July of 1904, with one P. P. S. friend, stopping in New York, Colorado, San Francisco, and across the Pacific to Japan. They stayed in Tokio about three weeks. They were asking for money to finance an insurrection, for arms, for military instructors, for definite support for the Polish Legion they would form, and better treatment for Polish prisoners of war. The last point Japan agreed to: Polish soldiers, acting on P. P. S. orders, would surrender at the first opportunity and were to be kept in camps, separate from the Russians, and given better treatment.

On the other points Pilsudski failed. The Japanese refused to foment an insurrection in Russian Poland, explaining suavely that they were being closely watched

90 by western Europe and could not afford to take a step so against the prejudices of the twentieth century. Moreover, they were gaining one victory after the other and could win the war without a diversion in the west.

The truth was, as we can see now, looking back to 1904 with some perspective, that the Great Powers were concerned to keep the war localized. If revolution broke out in Russian Poland, Germany would almost certainly rush in, siding with Russia—for the three Partitioners were always afraid that the slightest movement for freedom would spread from one group of Poles to the others. England was the ally of Japan, France of the czar. Let one more nation be drawn into the war and they might all become involved. At any cost their policy must be to limit it to the two original countries.

There was yet another reason for Pilsudski's failure. Dmowski (De-moff-skee), the leader of the conservative Polish party urging peace and a better understanding with Russia, was also in Tokio and spoke energetically against the plan. Poland's interests lay elsewhere, he argued; an insurrection now would accomplish nothing at all and could result only in a new wave of Russian oppression. The majority of Poles were loyal to Russia and wished to remain so, and this man Pilsudski represented a very small party, not in the least typical of all the Poles. Theirs was a scheme that was sheer madness, to be prevented at all costs. Once more Poland's cause was to suffer because the Poles could not agree among themselves—one more sign of their weakness—a tragic result of the long years of enslavement.

The return from this fruitless journey to Tokio begins a new period in Pilsudski's life. He changed from socialistic and revolutionary agitation to the firm opinion that the Polish-Russian affair could be settled in one way only—on the battlefield. He saw clearly what this would mean—that they would have to fight against

their oppressors and also against the pacifism of some Poles and the Russophile ideas of others. 91

He went first to St. Petersburg to find out if Poles were to be mobilized for the Russian army. There and in Warsaw he used his own name quite openly. The police learned of his presence and sent his photograph to all frontier stations and to all the gendarmerie, with orders to arrest him on the charge of preparing a Polish revolution. His friends insisted that he be more cautious and show himself several times in Krakow so that the Russians would hear of it and quiet down.

Pilsudski recalled how mobilization orders had been answered by the Poles in January of 1863. But 1904 found them too weak and too unprepared. Still, it would be a great mistake to make no protest at all, to let thousands of young Poles die in Manchuria when they would be needed to fight against Russia and for Poland. They must do something. Where? In Warsaw, to secure the biggest echo; for they were not strong enough to stage protests everywhere as in 1863. They would have an armed demonstration, but with only a small group of cool-headed men bearing arms.

He asked for help and for money from Poles. Every one refused. Again he was discouraged. The demonstration must be tiny, in comparison with what he wanted, but he went ahead and made the plans, coaching the men who were to carry them out. His friends insisted that his face was too well known to the police for him to risk going in person.

At noon on a Sunday in November, the people coming out of church into Plac Grzybowski (Ge-ji-bof'-skee) in Warsaw saw a little group of men—workmen and students—suddenly raise banners marked "P. P. S." and "We will not be the czar's soldiers!" They formed in procession and marched down the street, singing a patriotic song, *La Varsovienne*. The police attacking them were dispersed by shots from the men in the first

92 rows. Cossacks hidden in courtyards rode into the street and broke up the procession. Little sections of it escaped and marched here and there, down various important streets of the city. When it was finally over, there were eleven men killed and forty wounded.

Technically it wasn't carried out very well. It was more an expression of naiveté than of strength, but it had results far out of proportion to the numbers engaged and their efficiency. It was the first demonstration against czardom since 1864 and as such it attracted widespread attention. It was not without consequence on the immediate matter in hand—Russia ordered no mobilization in Warsaw, the only large city in the empire to be exempt.

People discussed the demonstration and argued hotly about it. Some of the P. P. S. were against it. All the peace-and-harmony-at-any-price men were indignant and began a feverish agitation in the press and in the churches for a loyal mobilization. There were no other such demonstrations anywhere in Poland.

Active fighters for independence had almost disappeared, now that a whole generation had grown up since 1863. Pilsudski wanted to create such a group, ten years before 1914, to be ready to take advantage of whatever political and economic circumstances might arise. Plac Grzybowski made the people a little accustomed to the idea of fighting, they had to get used to death. For Pilsudski it was a final break with passivity, the crossing of the line between dreams and definite, tragic action. Some people date his greatness from this time.

He found the P. P. S. grown stronger and he now took up in earnest the organization of a militant section which they named *Bojowka* (Bo-yof'-kah). It began with a little, untrained group that defended their meetings. Soon it carried on in army fashion. For months it worked against the wishes of some of the party.

Change and unrest were in the air. As a result of defeat at the hands of Japan, revolution broke out all over Russia in 1905. Peasants, nobles, intelligentsia, workmen—they all seemed ripe for revolution, politically and economically. The Poles were not ready to take part. There were many strikes, lasting for weeks. The disorder spread into Russian Poland. The P. P. S. called a general strike which led to struggles with the police and the declaration of martial law. The May first demonstrations of that year marked the height of the party's power.

Pilsudski determined to make use of the current situation to create an armed force to fight Russia. He had put great hopes on Poland's opportunity in 1904 and tried to convince the leaders among the politicians that that was the time to wage active war on their oppressor. Now if he could not have regular war, he would have guerilla warfare, made as effective as possible. There should be no useless heroics, no self-sacrifice merely for the sake of self-sacrifice.

Bojowka, a little group of a few dozen men, declared war on Russia. It was the historic idea of a Polish Legion in a new, hard form, waging a hard and brutal warfare. They were armed with automatic pistols, with hand grenades and bombs which they manufactured themselves. The war began, though there were no diplomatic declarations. In small towns, in the country there were attacks on Russian gendarmes. Here a patrol of Cossacks, there a gendarme station.

What did Pilsudski think he could accomplish by such actions? Poland had been so completely cowed by 1863 that it was necessary to begin at the very foundation. The common people must see that there lived some Poles ready to risk their lives for the freedom of Poland. These constant little demonstrations began to make the police nervous. Workmen began to notice and to think: Here is something positive, something

94 worth while because it is constant, not intermittent; then the Russians we have so feared are not all powerful, it was not necessary to be so slavish before them.

With the revolution of 1905 in Russia, Polish hopes flared up once more. The czar granted a constitution and in the first Russian Duma sat thirty-six Polish delegates. Dmowski was preaching the idea of uniting all Poles, with autonomy, within the Russian empire. The scheme was popular in Austrian Poland. His party of conservatives, urging an understanding with Russia, was particularly strong at this time and up to 1914.

When some one pointed out that their policy had brought the Poles no political advantages, they would reply, "But see what great economic advantages it has already given us! We now have the whole Russian market for the new Polish industries. Political results will come in due time."

Pilsudski considered the whole idea an illusion. He saw clearly that Poles must keep their goal—independence—quite separate from whatever changes might come in the czar's great empire. He would never be satisfied with autonomy. The Duma, he thought, would not work any permanent improvement in the Polish situation—nor did it; soon the number of Polish members was cut to twelve and the Parliament of Russia became a gesture and little more. Governmental reaction took away the temporary gains of the revolution. He knew the Russians too well and said, from the beginning, that the movement would not be good for the development of the Polish cause. It did have one positive result, however—it greatly increased the number of the P. P. S.

To the conservative groups who insisted, "It is sufficient if our generation keeps alive our Polish culture," Pilsudski and his co-workers would make answer, "But you're reasoning backwards. Culture is the result of national life, not its cause. For how many decades can it be kept alive without the nation? If there'd been no

Kosciuszko, no Legions of the Napoleonic period, if there's been no 1830, no 1848, no '63, there'd be no Poland for us to be striving for today. Economize on blood and save lives, be unwilling to fight, and you begin to die. Without these frequent insurrections russification would have been complete and in a few generations there'd have been neither Polish culture nor Polish nation. We must fight. We must make ready to fight."

Without *Bojowka* all idea of an armed movement would have been lost. It preserved that idea and kept it constantly in the minds of the people. Staff work was necessary and Pilsudski started schools to train recruits in guerilla warfare. Picked P. P. S. members went to Krakow for a three months' course and when they received certificates of proficiency, they were sent over the frontier. They worked in groups of five, guarding party headquarters, releasing Polish prisoners, watching for spies, attacking government convoys of cash which they took for the party treasury.

It was necessary to begin at the very beginning. Men were not used to assembling at a given time and place. They tried at first only the slightest of demonstrations—at a signal a group would run out into the street, unfurl a red flag, and disperse before the police could come up. Gradually *Bojowka's* members acquired self-control, the ability to obey orders, resolution and a discipline that was truly extraordinary. They became used to the idea of fighting and of using weapons.

"The will to drive out the invader," Pilsudski would argue, trying to rouse people, "is so weak that the nation does not believe victory is possible. We must revive the military spirit of the Poles; we must plow up the mind of the nation and plant it ready for the needs and tasks of war. We must create a warlike attitude of mind, to be ready when the occasion comes.

"Liberty will not be obtained by prayers or conversation or intrigue. It is necessary to pay the tribute of blood.

"The Poles had a good opportunity presented to them in the Crimean War," he would go on, "but they let the chance slide and did nothing till 1863. Again in 1904, but we were too weak, too undisciplined, too inexperienced to take advantage of our opportunity. Well, another one will come. We can not make a rising—that depends on circumstances beyond our control. But we can be ready to take advantage of these circumstances.

"It must be all the people, not merely one group. No class, let it be the most powerful, can carry through against the oppressor a victorious insurrection. It can be accomplished only by the entire nation."

"Even a bandit knows how to set his mind on something," he commented bitterly to one of his colleagues, "and run risks for his desires, but it seems as if our Polish public wants only to chatter and lament."

Bojowka carried out a series of raids, using terrorism because of the increased police persecution. If they attacked one gendarme, a thousand people would react; they wanted ten thousand people, therefore they would attack institutions—a bank, a postoffice, a prison. If they got money or released prisoners, it made more excitement among the people. It emphasized in their minds how helpless czarism was if it could not prevent these attacks and win out over the terrorists.

One result was the scattering of the Russian army. Soldiers had to be sent to many places, thus weakening their force. The crowd is always afraid of troops in large numbers, but when the soldiers are in smaller numbers it is they who begin to fear the crowd. All over the country the czar's authority was weakened until sometimes one gendarme went to his post, accompanied by four soldiers.

Eleven times in one year *Bojowka* members were successful in their raids—in a branch postoffice in Warsaw, at a railroad station, in the office of a government monopoly in Lodz, once holding up a bank collector on

the street. The largest sum they secured was six thousand four hundred twenty-seven roubles and ninety-four kopecks; other amounts ran four thousand nine hundred twenty-five, thirty-six hundred, twelve hundred forty-two, to use round numbers; and once, for all the terrible risk they ran, they got two roubles, seventy-five kopecks.

Bojowka called this "confiscation" and said it was right to take this money from the Russian government, because it was unlawfully exacted; this was war—a war that had begun in 1794 with Kosciuszko's insurrection and had never ceased; there had constantly been a latent state of war between Poland and Russia, with 1830 and 1863 marking special episodes. Raids were but another form of this unceasing warfare.

Legends grew up around *Bojowka* and its leaders. People would recount their exploits—a raid on some government institution, an attack on some Russian official—and say, admiringly if not always approvingly, "Wiktor has done another!" or "Ziuk at work again!" To boys it all had a fairy-tale sound, his nicknames, the dangers encountered fearlessly, the touch of humor in his giving a receipt for the full amounts taken. Legend said he was unseizable by the police. People got into the habit of ascribing to him exploits in which he had no part, either in planning or executing. They ascribed to *Bojowka* impossible deeds—and that seemed well, for they were in truth doing the impossible.

Here is one of these exploits: During the revolutionary days of 1905 there was fighting in the streets of Warsaw and ten Poles were arrested and sentenced to be hanged. A telephone message to the central prison in Warsaw told the director that these ten Polish leaders were to be transferred to the Citadel, he was to have them ready at a certain hour. A police captain on horseback with ten heavily armed soldiers went to the prison. They presented a written order—in due

98 form. Handcuffed, the ten men were packed into a prison wagon, a soldier sitting by each one. The wagon drove out from the prison gates and disappeared from view.

The next day it was found in a deserted spot on the outskirts of the city. Inside was the Russian coachman, bound and chloroformed—the only bona-fide official involved. All the others were conspirators disguised—the captain and ten armed soldiers; a forged written order. The ten condemned Poles had escaped from the czar's officials. On twelve street corners of Warsaw great placards announced:

Bojowka has freed the ten Poles, sentenced to die,
on the command of their leader, Jozef Pilsudski.

Though he was not in the city at the time and had not planned this particular exploit, Pilsudski's prestige grew and grew.

Releasing prisoners by such means might be all right, but many of their activities were severely frowned upon and criticized. Western Europe and America are quick to condemn such methods, but life has developed very differently there and in Russian Poland where the state called it just to make Polish taxes four or five times as large as Russian taxes, to release men from prison to make assaults on people, to obtain needed information by driving long splinters under the nails of helpless victims. The western world said "robbery" and "banditry" where the Poles said "terrorism"—their only resource. How else was it possible to struggle against exploitation?

To give a comparable instance: The English suffragists were discountenanced in America because of their stone throwing and breaking of windows; the whole movement and the leaders suffered as a result of undignified and useless destruction; gradually Americans learned that throwing of stones and breaking of windows was a time-honored method of protest in England.

Pilsudski's methods had to be startlingly new and radical; he had to fight fire with fire, official robbery with organized robbery— of the state. His terroristic activities were not directed against individuals. He was always opposed to throwing bombs to kill one czar or one general or one governor whose place would be promptly taken by another czar or governor or general, with conditions no better for Poland than before. He planned raids for one purpose—to get money for party work; and incidentally to teach a small group of *Bojowka* members how to fight and to use firearms.

He wanted to create in them, and through them in all of the Poles, a disdain for sudden, expected death; but it must be death for a high aim—the freedom of their nation.

"You must not consent to die for ten kopecks," he would say, "you must have a goal worthy of great sacrifice."

Men of unprecedented heroism and with the highest personal standard of ethics, he described the *Bojowka* members; but the conservative Poles severely criticised their activities, denying that they were legitimate, because acts of war, and calling the perpetrators many ugly names—bandits, desperadoes, robbers, political hotheads, worst of all, perhaps, promoters of banditry. His relatives, the society to which he belonged by birth, were shocked and scandalized at Pilsudski's revolutionary and terroristic activities.

Some of the working class were in opposition, too. They were not well off, but they felt safe. They wanted no violent change and did not like these new methods. *Bojowka's* activities were indeed so objectionable that men did not realize Pilsudski was on the right path and refused to follow him.

They made for him many enemies also in his own party. Some were opposed on principle—any illegal act was wrong. Some because it seemed so hopeless, when

100 Russia was a nation with a hundred and fifty millions, with limitless military and technical power; how ridiculous to think they could secure their aim with artillery and rifles. And some because it weakened the legitimate work of the P. P. S., which was to organize workmen and to agitate.

There had been a time when every Socialist in Poland regarded Pilsudski as the leader. There was never a dissenting voice.

"What's to be the chief business at Zakopane?" asked one member of another when they were starting to a P. P. S. congress there.

"To make Ziuk the king of Poland," was the reply.

There came another congress in Lwow, in February of 1906, where he made a speech defending *Bojowka* and insisting that the party must develop a military section to be ready for fighting in the future. His personal popularity was enough to carry this, put to a vote, by a big majority. But many members disapproved and in the following November there came a definite split in the P. P. S.—one group was plain Socialist, the other the militant Socialists. The weak members left Pilsudski, the stronger ones, including most of the workmen, stayed with him.

It proved to be a final break with the Socialists, the party he had built up with so much effort; the first of several times in his life when he deliberately destroyed the organization he had himself fashioned. But with his eyes always on the one goal—independence for Poland—he could see far ahead and events showed the wisdom of his course.

Meanwhile, Pilsudski had taken up the serious study of military affairs. His friends often saw him sitting for hours at a time, leaning over the maps of the Russian-Japanese war. His table was always covered with military books. Never a pupil of strategy in any military school, he would teach himself. His master was Napoleon,

his great hero as a boy, the greatest man in the world he now considered him. He studied his campaigns, his favorite manouvers, and frequently quoted one of his sayings: "The art of overcoming obstacles is the art of refusing to think this or that is an obstacle."

He studied too all the nineteenth century armies made up of volunteers and came to realize the enormous difficulties they must face. He did not brush aside those difficulties as unimportant, but always went back to the principle that the one necessary quality in an army was high morale. He made special studies of 1863 and the reasons for its failure: they had prepared the moral strength of the insurrection, but till the very last minute had made no plans for its physical strength—especially important since they were arrayed against the enormous physical strength of Russia.

His studies of 1863 gave him confidence in the latent strength of the nation. He firmly believed that the Poles were capable of a big endeavor. Events proved that he was right. Indeed the renaissance of the national spirit presupposes the survival of moral forces inaccessible to despair.

Bojowka's affairs were not going very well. Their raids resulted in very little money and daily expenses grew. Funds were needed for printing, for members' trials, for men in hiding, for others who escaped from prison and must be sent abroad. Sometimes a man, feeling pursuers on his trail, hadn't half a rouble to hail a passing doroshky and throw them off the scent.

The authorities redoubled their efforts. They had spies everywhere. A period of reaction set in, with many arrests and frequent executions at the Citadel. The party became smaller and smaller, particularly after the Russians adopted a new scheme to break up these terroristic activities. The actual participants escaped, but orders were issued to arrest five men, chosen at random from a list of the members, and hang them for this

102 raid—then another five for that one. The result was that the whole community became hostile.

First of all, they must have money and then the situation could be bettered. Pilsudski had tried to find new sources of revenue. He had appealed to some of the aristocrats, to large landowners and important industrialists; they all refused pointblank, without discussion. He had gone to wealthy Poles in St. Petersburg, without success. He appealed to the Poles in America where there was a strong organization of workmen who sympathized with his plans and sent what money they could. Reaction had the upper hand and their raids must stop; but it would never do to permit people to say *Bojowka* stopped because of failures. He wanted one big, successful stroke, a crowning glory to this chapter in the story of their work, then suddenly terroristic acts would cease and he would liquidate *Bojowka*.

In October of 1907 he began planning the Bezdany raid which took place the following September. He determined to lead it himself. Always before his friends had forbidden that, saying that his face was too well known and the police would redouble their efforts, once they knew he was taking part in an attack. They yielded now, since this was to be the last.

Due to some international situation, it was known that large sums of gold were being sent to Russia from abroad. It was shipped to Wilno from various cities in Europe, and thence by the one direct line to St. Petersburg—a long distance, always one night on the way. That answered the first question—they must find a place near Wilno.

It had many points in its favor. It was in Lithuania where there had been no raids; where police and gendarmes were fewer in number and less efficient; where the population was less dense and escape would be easier. Pilsudski knew this neighborhood thoroughly, as did some of his colleagues. In October two of them went

to explore the territory. The first station past Wilno was a fairly large one, so they chose the second—Bezdany.

But making plans and carrying out a raid cost money in themselves. They “confiscated” funds from a railroad paymaster whose military escort ran away; from ambush they threw a bomb at the horses of a postal van, though it had a guard of eight cavalrymen, took the money and got away on horseback; they stopped a train, took the cash of a railroad official, and rode merrily off on the engine. The enemy was not only to be raided, but must pay the costs.

Pilsudski went up to Wilno in January. His plan was to make the attack at once so that they could escape by sleigh. But the snow was waist deep, many roads were impassable, and they had to wait.

One man was given the task of watching trains, to ascertain on what days and at what hours money went through Bezdany; when large sums were sent there was a special escort of soldiers. He needed an assistant and Miss Aleksandra Szczerbinska (Sher-been'-skah), called “Ola” in P. P. S. circles, was summoned from Kiev. She began work in February, living in a modest room in the house of a Wilno policeman. Not an easy task, as the Wilno station had many gendarmes and Bezdany was a lonely district where every stranger attracted attention.

After weeks of monotonous, risky observation of trains coming and going, they could report definitely, “Money is shipped from Wilno to St. Petersburg every Tuesday and Saturday by the night train, with an escort of six or eight soldiers.” Nor was that all. “More escorted trains arrived at Wilno between Tuesday and Saturday than between Saturday and Tuesday; therefore the Saturday trains probably carried more money.” Supervision was much less strict than at Warsaw, for the escort was not in the postal car, but in the next one.

One more point settled—the raid must be on Saturday night.

They rented several apartments in Wilno, to be able to move from one to another in case of emergency. They began bringing ammunition, and dynamite to make bombs. They wanted to rent a country house somewhere between Wilno and Bezdany, but had no money for this. "Ola" found a two-room peasant cottage, not too far distant, and in July went to live there. One man settled on the river bank as an ardent fisherman; that gave them an excuse for keeping a boat and for frequent visits to the railroad station.

There were many roads at Bezdany. They could ask no questions of any of the natives, yet they must know roads and countryside by heart, since the raid would be at night. There were many questions to be answered definitely: where were the police? how far away were there detachments of soldiers? Three gendarmes in Bezdany, reported the scouts; one at the railroad station, which was between the little town and the forest, a sergeant, and a third there occasionally. Six miles away a detachment of police. Twenty miles off eight mounted police.

They were worried by the lack of money. They couldn't hire horses and a carriage. They had already sold their supply of arms and ammunition kept in Vienna and Berlin. Every one was discouraged, Pilsudski found when he returned from a conference in Krakow, every one except "Ola," staying all alone in the hut in the country. They would wait no longer. The day was set for Saturday, the nineteenth of September; the whole garrison at Wilno, except one regiment, was still at the summer manouvers.

Shortly before the raid Pilsudski wrote a letter to the leader of the Socialists in Austrian Poland, a letter significant because it was a political last will and testament, in case he did not return, because it contains a

forecast of his next task in the great work of securing independence for Poland, and because it shows at this early date something of the indignation and deep contempt which he felt for the conservatives of the upper and middle classes who later were to suffer from his bitter words. He did not hesitate to brand them as cowards and vermin, who did nothing themselves for Poland, but slandered the revolutionaries and called them robbers and bandits. He knew that some of them denounced him with mad hatred as an adventurer taking too great risks, a "damager" of the nation, who in his fight with Russia exposed them all to new persecutions and sorrowful experiences.

Here is the letter:

To the man who will write my death notice—You promised to write a beautiful death notice when the devil takes me, and now that I'm going on this raid and perhaps not coming back, I send you this request as to my necrologist. Of course I don't want to dictate to you the estimate of my work and life—certainly not! I only beg you not to make of me "a good officer" or "a dreamer and sentimentalist"—that is, a man of self-sacrifice, stretched upon the cross for the sake of humanity, or something of that sort. I was that to some extent in the days of my youth, exalted and sad. Not now. It has passed, never to return.

That dreaming and crucifixion got on my nerves when I watched it in our intelligentsia—how weak it is and how helpless! I am fighting and may die, only because I cannot live such a life. It is dishonoring—do you hear? It dishonors me as a man of dignity and not a slave. Let others amuse themselves with growing flowers, or Socialism, or Polonism (a word impossible to translate, a summing up of all the elements of Polish culture), or anything else they like in that insipid, inane atmosphere. I can't do it! This is not sentimentality, not dreaming, not the claptrap of social evolution, or anything of that sort. It is simply being a man. I want to conquer. Without a fight and a sharp struggle I am not even a babbler, but merely an animal submitting to whip and stick. You understand me, I hope. It is not despair, it is not sacrifice that guides me, but a desire to win and to prepare for victory.

My last idea, which I haven't developed anywhere yet, is the necessity arising in our circumstances of creating in every party, and above all the Socialists, the functioning of physical strength; it sounds unbearable to the ears of our "Humanitarians"—hysterical girls who can't endure to hear scratching on glass, but let you spit in their faces—the functioning of *brutal* strength. I wanted to work out this idea during the last year and promised myself that I would achieve my aim or perish. I have already achieved a good

deal in this direction, but too little to be able to rest on my laurels and make my preparations for the struggle; and therefore now I am staking everything on one card.

A few words more. Supposing I die in this raid, I want these facts to be clear: the first is sentimentality. I've sent so many men on dangerous exploits, sent them to the gallows, and in case I perish now that will be a kind of moral satisfaction to those silent heroes who will learn that their chief did not despise their work and didn't send them as tools to do the dirty work, keeping for himself the clean.

The second is stern necessity—money! Let the devil take it. I despise it, but I prefer to take it as booty in a fight than to beg for it from the Polish community which has become childish from cowardice. For I have no money and money I must have for my aims.

Third, I want to show by this example of myself—a man who has been called a noble Socialist, a man of whom even his enemies do not say foul things, a man then who has been of some little service in the general culture of the nation—I wish to underline with my own person this bitter, this very bitter truth—that in a community which doesn't know how to fight for itself, which steps back at every stroke of the whip in the face, *men* must die even in actions which are not lofty, beautiful and great.

That's all. And now best greetings to you and to all my good friends with whom we shared so many dreams, so many exploits, and mutual affection.

Yours, and theirs,
Ziuk.

Final plans were made. Some disguises were procured. They got a boat, a yellow cart, a team of horses and harness. Seven picked men came from the mining district—workmen, each strong enough to handle a company. Pilsudski had fixed the number at nineteen: six to throw the bombs and attack the escort—they must be very quick and determined; four to get the money from the postal van, after the escort was subdued—they must be especially cool and calm; he was to be in this group, even though it was his first experience in a raid; eight men to occupy the station, destroy the telegraph and telephone apparatus, and keep the public in check—passengers on the train and those in the waiting room—they must be very active; the last man was to stay with the horses and cart. The password was to be *Komuna* (the Revolution, in Russian).

The evening of the eighteenth they all met at one of the Wilno apartments. They went over the plans

again, rehearsing the task each man was to carry out —it was like a play at the theater, but this required more than good actors, it called for men who were fearless, who would not have “nerves.” 107

Pilsudski spoke of the hopeless situation of their party, with Russian persecution so strong, with the community hostile to every revolutionary move; somewhere they must take positive action; conditions were more favorable here in the north, the police clumsy and less clever. They couldn't know how much money they would get, but not less than thirty thousand roubles. They must succeed. For a last time their parts were rehearsed.

But the best laid plans, even of a Pilsudski, can go amiss. Saturday night was unusually dark. The roads were very muddy. The group going on foot lost their way in the blackness, were afraid their electric torches would attract attention, and arrived after the scheduled hour. Several times the yellow cart got stuck in marshy ground, once it almost overturned, it came very late to the meeting place in the forest. Impossible to get the bombs out, carry them to the tracks by the station, distribute them as planned, and have everything ready.

They must wait for a week. The conspirators were discouraged. To think that a picked group could manage no better than that! Where to house nineteen men?

“Don't be discouraged,” Pilsudski advised. “It is just so much experience gained.”

The week dragged slowly by. They were very short of money. They pooled all the cash of the nineteen and used it for food sparingly. Again on Friday evening they all met in Wilno. This time, said the leader, nothing must go wrong. Their funds were so low, the raid must succeed—at any price. It was Do or Die.

“And if we fail?” some one suggested.

"If we fail, we die making the attempt, and only a tradition of our group remains. We have no other hope. We must succeed."

The small balance in their treasury was divided among the men. Pilsudski took not a kopeck. They received pistols and ammunition, parcels of food and cognac. They were to start earlier than before.

The next afternoon the men going on foot, taking different roads, met at a lake; there they rested, ate, smoked innumerable cigarettes, and at dusk went on their way. The men in the cart had one misadventure—in the darkness the cart turned over and all their tools and the bombs fell out. Risky or not, they had to use their flashlights to collect and store them away. But on schedule time they were all on hand and ready. No hesitation, no fear, only keep cool and obey orders.

Three men went to the station. One looked for the gendarme, one leaned against the door as if asleep, the third at another door was apparently drunk. Everything was quiet. Two men walked up and down the platform. A young Jewish woman came in and one of them began a flirtation with her. His colleague watched that bit of play, not in their plans, but never mind.

Pilsudski and two men came from the forest, carrying acetylene lamps and some explosives which they placed at the spot where the postal van would be when the train stopped. Four men had entered the train at Wilno, taking places some in the second class, some in the third, to learn what soldiers and officers were aboard. The train was slowing down for Bezdany when the action of the raid began. Next to the postal van was the escorts' car, with several soldiers on the platform and others looking out of the windows.

Two men ran along by the postal van, striking at the window, and when it broke pushing a bomb through—pushing, not throwing, lest it explode too soon. A terrific roar, so that some of the conspirators were

thrown back. A second bomb put out the lights in the car and broke the rest of the windows. A voice shouted for the acetylene lamps. The passengers on the train were frightened. Some of the women lay down on the floor.

In the escorts' car flashlights showed three soldiers with rifles. One of the raiders, pistol in hand, called out in Russian, "Get out! Drop that rifle!" and swore at them. They obeyed, jumped to the platform, and ran toward the forest.

Each group carried out its orders. The telegraph and telephone instruments were demolished. Passengers and railroad men who had run in panic into the station waiting room when the bombs exploded, were calmed down and told not to be afraid. A group of people coming toward the station was dispersed by shots fired into the air. One man watched the engineer who was compelled to lie down. The conspirators who were passengers on the train called out to their neighbors, "Don't leave the train!" and to frighten them threw some petards (bombs making much noise but doing no harm).

When the smoke lifted, Pilsudski and one man approached the postal van and threatened to throw another bomb if the door was not opened.

"We surrender. We will not shoot," answered a frightened voice.

"I will count to ten. A bomb then."

The door opened and two railroad men, hands up, begged for their lives, pleading that they were not armed. Pilsudski ordered them searched and led to the waiting room. At the back of the car was a third man, deadly pale.

"Where is the money?"

The fellow pointed to some bags lying on the floor. There and on the shelves were many packages. Quickly but carefully the raiders began opening them. Some

110 were drafts, not cash. Some were bonds. They took out what cash there was, tossing the letters away.

"Take whatever you want," said the man, "but don't make such a mess here in the postal van."

They found fifty bags of silver, with fifty thousand roubles; alas! it weighed two thousand pounds and the horses couldn't carry it. These they must leave. They found too many parcels of banknotes with the signatures of cashiers cut off; these were being sent to St. Petersburg to be exchanged for new ones.

In another van was an official with the cash from the railroad ticket offices. He refused to open the door, so it was blown in with dynamite. At the mention of a bomb he came out, shaking with fear, and was led away to the waiting room. The large cash box there they found contained smaller locked boxes. Some one ran for an axe and they were smashed.

In these two sections of the silent train work went on feverishly. Another train was due at Bezdany, so they had only forty-five minutes. They opened, examined, sorted with their eyes on their watches.

Fifteen minutes more, came the warning.

Ten minutes.

The man in the postal van too was anxious about the next train and urged, "Hurry, hurry, or you'll all be caught!"

"Five minutes more." It was Pilsudski's calm voice. "Work at top speed."

They heard the whistle of an engine. He ordered his men to leave the two cars. A trumpet gave the signal for retreat. Carrying on their backs the bags with their booty, they went up the railroad tracks. From the train windows faces looked out shyly.

"You won't throw any more bombs, gentlemen?" asked a woman's voice, humbly.

"We fight only the government of the czar. We won't do any harm to passengers."

An uproar broke out then in the station waiting room.

"Throw a bomb," called one raider to his colleague.

A petard was thrown and the people were at once quiet.

When they reached the forest, some men went to the river where boats were waiting. Some escaped on foot, later boarding trains going to various cities. The booty was stored away under the seat of the yellow cart. Pilsudski with several men climbed in. They drove very slowly to make no noise. Avoiding the highroads, choosing country lanes and byways, losing their way once, stopping before sunrise in a little wood to put on the Russian uniform and cap that were to serve as a disguise, they arrived at "Ola's" hut about ten o'clock the next morning. She had gone some distance up the road to meet them. She noticed first of all that their faces were gray, stamped with a look of utter fatigue, with dark circles under their eyes.

Announcing that he was tired, Pilsudski locked himself in the hut and began examining the small packages they had brought. About a fifth of them proved to be passports, documents, business papers—quite useless to *Bojowka*. The package of bonds and a bag of money were buried in the ground.

The raiders scattered in various directions. "Ola" and Pilsudski bought tickets for Odessa, but left that train at a junction, changed their hats as a slight disguise, and took a train for Kiev. After some days there they went to Krakow. Two months later, when the frozen ground made the task very difficult, "Ola" returned by a roundabout way and with one man to help her, dug up the money and took it in suitcases via Kiev to Krakow. Later still the bonds were rescued and sold, a few at a time, in Moscow and St. Petersburg and Kiev.

The Russian police records stated that the Bezdany raiders stole four hundred seventy-seven thousand, four

112 hundred and eight roubles. A memorandum recently found, in Pilsudski's writing, says that the sum was two hundred thousand, six hundred twelve roubles and sixty-one kopecks. The difference is easily explained. He was counting actual cash and figured all the bonds not at their face value, but at the amounts they actually yielded; for they had to be sold for forty or fifty per cent. There was no difficulty about using the bank notes, as the Russians were too proud to publish their numbers.

Three days after the raid the Russians counted the cash and securities left in the train, and the bank notes without signatures. They totaled two million, seven hundred thousand, seven hundred and twenty-eight roubles. Many books give this as the sum Bezdany contributed to the party treasury. Exaggerated reports were spread abroad. The first newspaper headlines read,

“CONFISCATION OF ONE MILLION ROUBLES — FORTY RAIDERS”

Even members of the party thought the proceeds far larger than they were and presented extravagant plans for using the Bezdany money. But the sum was all too small, for Pilsudski now began in earnest on a new undertaking—rather, he had already begun, in Lwow, organizing the Z. W. C. (the initial letters of the Polish words meaning “Union for Active Struggle”).

The police received special orders to capture the raiders without fail. They reached Bezdany several hours after the affair and went in the wrong direction in their first search. They did arrest one man and tortured him till he told what names he knew—“Bogdan” and “Stans” and so on. A second suspect was forced to look through a book of photographs of P. P. S. members and identify faces. In this way the gendarmes gradually got a complete list of the raiders. Five were

seized and imprisoned—they were liberated by Keren- 113
sky in 1917.

“Among the accused,” read the official record when the case was closed the following July, “Pilsudski and seven more (naming them) could not be arrested because they were in hiding.”

Bezdney was a milestone in the life of Pilsudski, in the story of the new Poland. It was the end of the years of revolutionary struggle, the beginning of his new task—to create a Polish military force. Up to Bezdney he had followed Socialist lines. After it he adopted a new slogan, “Long live independent Poland!”

IX.

REAL PREPARATIONS.

One of the rarest gifts is the ability to look ahead and forecast events. Pilsudski had this gift to a marked degree. For fully ten years he foresaw war in Russia—perhaps a war between Russia and Austria, perhaps a revolution within her borders, but war. Therefore, he argued, the first step is to build up a Polish army.

Here the normal order must be reversed—the army must come before the state. Many people, he felt confident, desired an insurrection. They must be organized. If efficient organizing had gone on for a dozen years before, 1863 would have been a success. Preparations cannot be made after war breaks out.

How set to work? Educate some under-officers, picking for this men who were good at organizing and had a sense of responsibility. Teach them blind obedience. Then divide them into groups and choose the leaders.

As was so often the case, this was no sudden decision on Pilsudski's part, not an abrupt change of policy. In December of 1907 he had written in a letter:

"The czar's government has revived. For the time being nothing can be done in Russia. A suitable time will come. Meanwhile it's our duty to take advantage of this revolutionary quiet and make ready for the next step. We must get military training. How? There is no military school for Poles, no military literature.

"It might be possible to use those Poles who have finished their military service and returned to civil life, as teachers for the others. Then the militant members of the party could use what experience they have gained in raids, and teach the others. These are the only two means I can see."

They would make a beginning in Austrian Poland, 115 to be ready for whatever might come. Centering the work at Lwow, gradually spreading it through the country, he used the Bezdany money to start secret military schools, with Japanese instructors. The Z. W. C., as he named this new organization, was not political, not socialistic, but patriotic and definitely military. A dozen together, its members drilled secretly, in back yards. At first they worked haphazardly, under great inconveniences. Still it was a beginning, a base for future operations.

"I belonged to the Z. W. C. from the very start—that was 1908," said a Polish poet and artist. "I was fourteen years old, a school boy in Lwow. Before that, I'd been one of a group of *gimnazjum* pupils who used to meet to study about Poland the things we couldn't learn at school—that was necessary, even in Austrian Poland. From such a little circle those boys who were considered good material were asked to join the new military organization. Z. W. C.—the Union for Active Struggle—the very name sounded patriotic. A group numbered no more than ten or twelve.

"Later on those who were more intelligent were chosen for further training—the older *gimnazjum* students and some professors. The Commander, as we always called Pilsudski, was living in Lwow part of the time and frequently came to our drills."

Into this new movement he threw himself enthusiastically. Almost at once he became its undisputed leader. From this time on he was greater than any party, for he was creating the nucleus of a national army, a truly Polish army, which should be not a class organization but representative of every class, of the whole community.

"The Germans, the French, the Russians sometimes talk of our military enthusiasm, our love of fighting," he said, trying to rouse interest in this new movement.

116 "1905 made me see the Poles differently. Our courage was rotted and so lost. It is necessary to begin again, to learn to be brave and courageous. More than a century without a Polish army has made us the most peaceful people in the world—the ideal of pacifists!

"But, you argue, half a million Poles are constantly going into one army or another. If a war should come, more than a million would serve. True, but a man going into the army becomes at once a foreigner, the soldier of one of the Partitioners. Even the peasants feel the same and call a man returned from his military service 'the Russian' (using a very derogatory word in Polish), while educated men think back on their years in this army or that one as a nightmare.

"If the nation wishes to break away from the chains of slavery, it must have its own army, its own defenders. If we don't have it, if we take no part in the next war between Austria and Russia, we will erase our name for a long time from the ranks of living nations. Europe will cease to take us into consideration. Our neighbors will destroy us and we will be eternally slaves."

He ended the long discussion about independence and began real preparations to achieve it by armed force. The announcement of his plan to organize an illegal military force to fight against czarism met with ridicule at first. Slowly people came to accept his idea. He opened a military treasury in Krakow in 1909. He formed shooting clubs that were called the *Strzelec* (St-jel'ess—Riflemen's Association). The following year he took advantage of a new Austrian law to encourage patriotic societies for sports and legalized the *Strzelec*.

This became very popular with young men. It spread rapidly all through Austrian Poland where they could meet openly and practise shooting, where they could march and drill. It spread across the frontier into Russian Poland where it was perforce a secret organization, always in very small groups. It spread too among Poles

abroad—in Russia, Switzerland and Belgium, in France and in America—wherever there were Polish students or Polish workmen. A great deal of money for the *Strzelec* came from the Poles in America. 117

Schoolboys, young men, workmen belonged. University students were allowed to join, but *gimnazjum* boys were expelled if their membership was discovered. Many belonged secretly and ran away to attend the meetings, some of them pretending to be older than their years. Lads who were under sixteen, the age limit, were told to join the Boy Scouts and work hard at Scouting to be the better ready when they were a little older.

Asked by one of the early *Strzelec* members, years later, why he had put so much emphasis on recruiting boys for its ranks, Pilsudski replied, "The idea of fighting for Poland's independence was regarded as crazy. But boys will accept a crazy idea and take it up enthusiastically, for boys are hot-headed and idealistic. Youth is undisciplined and sees no dangers. Youth is all ideals and hopes. The workmen? Well, they were so wretchedly off, they had nothing to lose."

The Krakow group, more or less typical of them all, had about a hundred members, divided into five sections. They had regular lessons in military affairs, planned for privates, for N. C. O.'s, for higher and lower officers. They drilled in the fields or on the Krakow parade ground. Sometimes they would march fifty or sixty kilometers and spend two days in the country for simple manouvers. They carried rifles and wore a gray uniform.

Pilsudski went to all the important drills. He went down into the trenches. He gave military lectures—many in the class for officers. He roused their ambition, he made them believe in their own strength, he gave them a goal worthy of sacrifices. And in return they gave him love, obedience, faith without limit. "The Commander says—" or "the Commander wishes—" that was

118 enough. The adoration that later spread to the whole nation started with the *Strzelec* whose members felt the greatest confidence in him and sensed his innate quality of leadership.

The *Strzelec* grew and grew, but the greater part of the nation remained passive and made no response to his requests for support. Men were worried with the troubles of everyday life, or they were sybarites, thinking only of money and the comforts it might bring them. They hoped if they did nothing against the Partitioners they would have peace and possibly a better future. They were apparently reconciled to a foreign yoke—German or Austrian or Russian; or if not reconciled, they saw nothing to do but to submit. Pilsudski's ideas they labeled with the old word "romantic."

"How reach the sun with a butterfly net?" they demanded. "It is not common sense to go against the three greatest powers of Europe, with a company of sportsmen!"

There were members aplenty. As to money and arms, quite a different story. Each group had to be self-supporting. Each man bought his own uniform and paid what dues he could afford. A few older men contributed to the *Strzelec* treasury, but its chronic condition was "nearly empty." From the Austrian government they had no money, no uniforms, only some old rifles—one for every twenty members. That came as a result of Pilsudski's taking part, with a detachment of his *Strzelec*, in a congress of various athletic organizations held at Vienna, and marching in the grand review. It gave this advantage—his organization was in favor and could develop openly and freely; it established a first contact with the Austrian General Staff.

The Austrians, on their side, were not suspicious. The Poles had to all appearances been satisfied for the last few decades. What were the *Strzelec*? Not a dan-

gerous organization, but a group like the Czech bicycle union, going off into the woods to spend a Sunday. 119

So began this private army of Jozef Pilsudski's, which was in fact the foundation of a new Polish army. Strange and apparently useless groups of young men, not even armed or equipped. A few thousand of them, training in Austrian Poland.

"What is the use of such child's play?" the majority of Poles asked. "If war should begin in Europe, ten million men would stand in arms in the first days of the conflict. Who will ever notice the part played by a few hundred Polish soldiers, dying for other countries' interests, as Polish soldiers are generally forced to do?"

Hardly anyone understood that he was educating and training the officers who would organize and command troops to be summoned in case of necessity. First of all, he must have ready officers and staff. Their training must be long and elaborate, while recruits could be taught in a few months. Poland had people enough to form a large army, if only the problem of officers was solved.

A Polish army! It was a mad idea then, fantastic. Pilsudski would be the leader of an army which had no state. There was nothing in history to compare with it. One man with a few followers had sometimes tried to conquer a state, but here one man with a few followers wanted to resurrect an old state in whose continued non-existence three great empires were interested.

He gave more and more time to the study of military affairs. He urged his friends to study also, to read military literature, to militarize their surroundings. He made them attend military lectures and take military courses. He and his staff began to wear their uniforms all the time. It was his goodbye to "mufti," for with the exception of a brief period in 1927 he was in uniform from now until his death.

In these young people who flocked around him he wanted to develop the highest possible degree of endurance, of courage, of personal dignity, as a group and as individuals. Some boys may have joined the *Strzelec* for the excitement and adventure it promised, lured by the magic of uniforms and drills. But the great majority of them came from families like Pilsudski's, burning with patriotism, who from early childhood had been taught the exaltation of service for their country. This offered far more than the mere glamor of play-soldiering. This was for Poland.

The *Strzelec*, like the Z. W. C., had no connection with any political party. There was nothing socialistic about it. It was national. Pilsudski tried to instill in its members three things: love for their country, confidence in their leader, a sense of duty. This last, he would say, meant hard work, discipline, punctuality, zeal. It was not easy work. They had to learn by heart the manual of arms. They had to think hard to understand it, so little military training had they had. His material was not of the best—they were young and ignorant of soldiering.

He would talk to them of former attempts to win independence and the reasons for failure. He would analyze the weaknesses of Poles, which he called national defects acquired during the long period of enslavement: a straw fire of enthusiasm and lack of perseverance, super-criticism, love of opposition, inclination to debate, lack of the instinct of subordination. So many years of peace, plus the lack of an army, had made them soft. All this must be altered.

Pilsudski had at first counted on internal troubles which would weaken Russia. In some crisis there the Poles would intervene and begin a struggle for independence. Gradually his keen study of the changes in international affairs convinced him that war was coming. He was one of the few Poles who foresaw this, the

only one who made any preparations for it. Each crisis in Europe gave an impetus to his organization.

In 1908 Austria announced her annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This was a blow to Serbia and therefore a blow to Russia, but the czar was too weak, after his defeat by Japan, to take active measures to support the Serbians. The incident passed off without any fighting. But Austria and Russia faced each other with suspicion and fear. Many people felt that war between them was only a question of time. Others, equally wise and far-seeing, as they thought, argued that the balance of power was a sure guarantee of peace.

Over and over Pilsudski would say, War will come; the necessary incident given, it will break out suddenly; when that happens, the opportunity must be followed up for the benefit of Poland.

In 1912 he was poring over maps and reports of the Balkan war from which he learned again the enormous importance of morale in an army. Black clouds gathered in the political sky, with great tension between Austria and Russia. There were rumors of war, indeed Austria ordered a partial mobilization. The difficulties between the two empires were settled—for the present. But the whole international situation pointed to the fact that the moment for which he had been preparing was coming nearer and nearer.

One day—this in 1912—he was walking on the outskirts of Krakow with a friend when they met one of the *Strzelec* members carrying a lance. He was dressed in the gray uniform, by then a familiar sight, but with some slight changes.

"There," said Pilsudski, saluting, "goes my cavalry. Everything but the horses!"

With what material there was available, of men and rifles, he gave the *Strzelec* the most intense training possible. Military exercises, shooting, summer camps, manœuvres, lectures in military tactics and military history,

122 lectures on technical questions, on the political situation in Poland and in Europe, talks on those psychological problems that are bound up in the word "morale," everything necessary for the mental background of officers in a national army. There came into being a staff and a staff college with a corps of lecturers.

There were women's divisions of the *Strzelec* too, in Lwow and Krakow. Some of the members were *gimnazjum* students of seventeen—and their mothers. One section began with only twenty, but soon grew to two hundred. Two or three times a week they met for drills. They learned about hospital work, sanitary duties, military telegraph and telephone, and other work women could do to release men for active service.

There was a rival organization, as military as the *Strzelec*, but politically conservative. Its name meant "Riflemen's Association of Non-Socialistic Radical Youth." Its leaders informed Pilsudski that if war broke out, this group would at once come under his command. Every one accepted him as the natural leader, so impressed were they by his wisdom and his practical arguments.

In February of 1914 he went to Paris where he spoke to the alumni of the Polish school, in the hall of the Geographic Society. He foretold the war that was threatening and pointed out how necessary it was to stimulate military preparations.

"The day when we possess an armed force all the world, including our friends and our enemies, will think about the vital interests of our country. * * * At the end of the war conquerors and conquered will be weakened. That will be our opportunity. We must be ready for the end. That will be our safety."

Then he spoke of his firm belief that a Polish army would lead to definite political results.

"One objection against the military movement," he said, "comes from the camp of those who fear that arousing the

warlike faculties of a nation will result in a disastrous explosion. Nothing is less justified than such fears. On the contrary, the development of military preparations has already given results positive and undeniable. For Poland this has a certain value in the political market of Europe, where the Polish question has been mercilessly excluded since the failure of the insurrection of 1863. They have lost the habit of taking us into consideration in their international calculations and combinations. The development of our army will put the Polish problem on the chessboard of Europe.

"It's importance seems to me so much greater from the fact that, since the year 1904, we have looked on at a whole series of disorders and conflicts where the decisive role has been played by an armed force. In the balance of the destiny of nations the sword alone counts today. A people who shut their eyes to this truth compromise their future irremediably. We ought not to be such a people. The initiators of the military movement have pointed out to the country the road to follow. But the final result will depend wholly on the intensity of the collective effort, on the persevering and active cooperation of all the nation."

Then came two sentences that sound like prophecy:

"The problem of the independence of Poland will be definitely solved only when Russia shall be beaten by Germany—and Germany by France. It is our duty to lend our help to that aim; otherwise we shall have to pursue a very long and almost desperate struggle."

At the end of June the heir to the Austrian throne was assassinated at Sarajevo. Diplomats talked and wrote memoranda. Ultimatum followed ultimatum. The month of July Pilsudski spent near Krakow, giving a course in military preparation. He shared the life in the field, teaching the *Strzelec* members the handling of arms, planning with the staff attacks which they carried out against an imaginary enemy. When the course ended they marched in review before the Commander. A small force, to be sure, but with excellent morale.

There was feverish excitement among the *Strzelec*. If war came, what should do the Poles do? Wait for a manifesto from Vienna? No, argued Pilsudski, Poles should take the initiative.

On the third of August he ordered three companies of the *Strzelec* to mobilize, ready to march at any mo-

124 ment. He had a force of four thousand all prepared, but no arms for them. He tried desperately to get some equipment from the Austrian authorities. He went in person to Vienna and talked with the General Staff, but his request for arms and ammunition was refused because he would not bind himself with political promises.

The hour for which he had long been planning and waiting had struck. About three o'clock on the morning of August sixth, he and his men marched out from Krakow and crossed the frontier into Russian Poland.

A few hours later Austria declared war against Russia.

X.

THE LEGIONS.

August of 1914.

The outbreak of the greatest war in all history, as one nation after another entered the conflict until nearly the whole of Europe was involved, and ultimately America also. The situation was surely more tragic for the Poles than for any other people. Partitioned among three great states, the call to arms meant that they must fight on different sides, must fire on each other, serving the cause of their masters.

The Central Powers were arrayed against the Allies. Russia had been in the past the enemy of Poland, but was now the ally of England, the home of many Polish exiles, and of France, the traditional friend of Poland and the asylum for many persecuted Poles. It was perhaps easier to side with Austria, but that meant to join with Germany who with iron fist had tried to stamp out all feeling of Polish nationality. It must have been difficult enough for the Poles to take sides.

And what of Poland? People recalled a poem of Mickiewicz asking God not for peace, but for a general war; for peace meant the success of the Partitioning Powers and death to the Polish cause; peace meant that no foreigners were interested in Poland. Now that general war had begun, could Poles hope for any results? If Germany and Austria won, they would between them make a different Poland at the expense of Russia. If the Allies won, they would make a different Poland at the

expense of Austria and Germany. Neither possibility offered independence. Only one thing was sure—Poland, lying between the Central Powers and Russia, would be the battle ground in the east. It would be crossed and recrossed by armies, friendly or hostile. There would be extensive and costly devastation.

Various reasons were given why this country and that one declared war. But the Polish cause was not included in the list for which men were marching out to battle and the shedding of blood. Very few thought of making Poland's status other than it had been for decades past.

A hundred thousand young Poles were summoned to the Russian army. Many thousands must perforce put on Austrian and German uniforms. Pilsudski wanted to show the world that Poles could go not only as German, Austrian, Russian soldiers, but as Polish soldiers also, to fight for Poland. He was for Poland and Poland alone. But for the present, it was necessary to side with one group of belligerents or the other.

In a speech that he made eight years later, Pilsudski gives his line of reasoning:

"When I came to the conclusion that no one wanted to fight about Poland and that political factors could not play any part, I had to calculate on the basis of *Do ut des*—I could either give soldiers or a spy service. My character made it impossible to give the latter, so I decided to give what appeared to me most difficult in this case, the trained arm of a soldier, who must win for himself his right to be called a soldier among his own people as well as among foreigners, by his hard toil.

"Then I asked myself what Partition offered this possibility of creating an armed force, which would count when all, both conquerors and conquered, were weakened under the destiny of war. I saw immediately that the only country where it was possible to begin and carry through such work was Austria. I reckoned that Germany with her iron state organization and her machine, would at once put in every one capable of fighting. Russia was no use—she was too confident in her own strength and her policy of force in dealing with her subjects. Austria remained the weakest state, maintaining herself alive as the type of political tight-rope walker, dependent on her subjects. The easiest to talk to, if it was Austrian talk."

There was no delay. On that very foggy morning of August sixth, about three o'clock, Pilsudski marched out from Krakow with three companies of his Legions. They numbered one hundred and sixty-three. Only one company had modern repeating rifles. The others had old-fashioned ones, an 1879 model. There were eight cavalymen, but of these eight five carried their saddles, hoping to get mounts on the Russian side of the frontier.

Some of the men, those who were strong enough, carried extra rifles—one, or even two. "The little one," their youngest member, had three; he was a fifteen-year-old boy, tall for his age, in a Boy Scout uniform, who wept and wept until they agreed to take him along. Today, a very tall, well-built man, director of an important enterprise in Warsaw, he is still called "the little one" by his friends of the Legions.

The men had two hundred cartridges apiece. They had a war chest of a hundred crowns. Thus the Polish army set out that summer morning to wage war with the empire of the czar, to win independence for Poland. The Poles had taken the initiative!

It was not ideal. It was not what Pilsudski had hoped for. But he thought all they lacked was compensated for by the necessity of war, by their Polish patriotism, by the enthusiasm and sacrifices of his men. A handful of adventurers with intrepid hearts, marching to the conquest of their own country.

They started northeast from Krakow toward the frontier separating Austria and Russia. Pilsudski had received from the Austrian authorities a permit to pass the frontier. Beyond that nothing. No one had invited him to organize the Polish Legions and take command of them. His relations with the Austrians were not definite and clear. They had no agreement. He had asked for arms, but would accept no political conditions. No one knew the exact status of the Legions. March on! The first Polish force since 1863 was actually in the field.

They came to the frontier. There was now no question of disguise to pass the customs officials, as in the conspiracy days when Pilsudski was going up to Warsaw or Wilno on P. P. S. business. The exact line was marked by posts bearing on one side the Austrian eagle, on the other the Russian. The Legionaries chopped down those posts. No more frontier — it was all Poland!

A hundred and sixty-three. Such a very small group, carrying out an action unique in Polish history. A much smaller number than went with Kosciuszko—or in 1830—or in 1863. Yet the sixth of August marks the date of the last phase of the struggle for independence. More than one Polish city has a Sixth of August Street.

They had no orders, no permit to go farther than a certain village near the frontier. The Austrians, Pilsudski knew, had no confidence in the Legions and gave the name of that village, not expecting they would ever reach it. He felt this as an affront to his men and decided to push on to Kielce (Kel'se), the largest town in that vicinity, a hundred and twenty-five kilometers from Krakow, for there the German and Austrian armies were to meet.

As they marched on, the Legionaries got hold of thick black paint and at every village, at every crossroads, they painted out the Russian letters marking post offices, police stations, and the other local offices of the czar's government. No more Russian words in Poland!

In the next two days more than two thousand men left Krakow, crossed the frontier, and joined their comrades. They reached Kielce in six days—a prodigious march, especially for beginners—and occupied the town before either the Germans or the Austrians arrived. This crossing into Russian territory, the march to Kielce, some Poles called the act of a madman, while others considered it a romantic exploit that put a halo around Pilsudski's head. He himself later described it as a very

bold military action. It created a *fait accompli* in the name of the Polish nation. 129

In the Kielce marketplace were Polish soldiers and the white and red flag of Poland was flying—the first in many decades.

“We wanted the Polish soldier,” Pilsudski summed it up later, “not to remain a mystical entity deprived of flesh and blood. In the great world war, fought on Polish soil, when soldiers with bayonets and uniforms would penetrate to every cottage and farm of the countryside, we wanted the Polish soldier to be something more than a pretty picture. We wanted Poland who had forgotten the sword so entirely since 1863, to see it flashing in the air, in the hands of her own soldiers.”

It was not only the Poles who must be made aware of the existence of the Legions. All the countries involved in the war, Central Powers and Allies alike, must be reminded that there was still a Poland, to be reckoned with during the fighting, to be considered in the discussions at the peace table.

“I would not allow Poles to be missing,” Pilsudski expressed this thought, “at a time when foreign powers were cutting new frontiers. When swords were being thrown into the scales of destiny, I would not allow the Polish sword to be absent.”

After two days the Russian artillery drove the Legions out of Kielce. Returning from a conference with some Austrian officers, Pilsudski met his men on the highroad, ordered them to turn back, and led them in person to drive out the Russians and occupy the town again—an event small enough in itself, but doubling the men’s confidence in him. For the future it was invaluable.

He was busy enough the four weeks they stayed at Kielce. They were so poorly equipped, there was everything to do: requisition horses, open workshops—tailoring shop, shoe shop, harness shop—enroll volunteers,

130 place the Legionaries coming from Krakow and Lwow, drill all the men, and begin to weld them into a unified force. He wanted to inspire them with the maximum of ambition, honor, love of the Legions, pride in belonging to this first formation of the future Polish army, and a feeling of independence of foreigners.

He established too an Intelligence Service, to bring in information of the movements of the enemy. Though he had some cavalry, this new service was almost exclusively women. They jolted along in carts over all the roads, covering greater areas than the horsemen, fulfilling their duties with even greater self-sacrifice. Thanks to them Pilsudski knew more of the whereabouts of the Russians than did the Germans at Kielce.

He had one great disappointment. He had hoped that as soon as they crossed the frontier and stood, a Polish army on Polish soil, ready to fight against Russia and for Poland, the Polish population there would rise to support them; that as soon as people saw the Polish flag recruits would come flocking to join them. That was the reason for the extra rifles—the Poles in Russian Poland would not have any. He issued a proclamation which was stamped with the white eagle, the emblem of Poland for more than a thousand years. A man had worked all night long cutting this new seal. Pilsudski wanted to make it as effective as had been the seal of the secret national committee in 1863. He announced the formation of a national government at Warsaw, under whose orders the Legions were serving. Who was this national government? It was one man—Jozef Pilsudski. Years later he would speak of it with a twinkle in his eye.

However, the people did nothing. They were apathetic and afraid of the Russians. A hundred thousand young men went into the czar's army, men who might have joined Pilsudski and made a creditable force. News came from other parts of Russian Poland—of the Ger-

mans' steady advance from the west, of the Russians' running away. Yet the Poles made no attempt to start an insurrection. When orders were received from Warsaw that they were to keep quiet, Boy Scouts and Sokols and other such organizations which might have done something obeyed passively. The Poles were letting themselves be mobilized. Soon it became clear, beyond any doubt, that they would not support the Polish Legions. It was the second great disappointment in Pilsudski's life. They must suffer then in the ranks of the enemy army.

Nor was Austrian Poland standing back of him. On the sixteenth of August there was formed at Krakow a Polish National Committee whose aim was to unite Russian Poland and Austrian Poland in the Austrian empire. Grudgingly, because he had no other resource, Pilsudski made use of this committee as the link between him and the Austrian authorities. Other groups at Krakow were neutral; if they did not openly oppose the Legions, they did not help.

Meanwhile another Polish Committee was formed, this one at Warsaw, denying the right of the Krakow men to speak for the Polish nation, protesting their loyalty to the czar, and trying to form a Legion to fight with Russia.

It was the same old story—divided counsels among the leaders who agreed completely as to their goal, but disagreed as to the right method of reaching that goal. The result was misunderstandings, political divisions, personal bitterness. It was one more proof of the weakness of the Polish nation, a tragic result of the Partitions. Divided into three parts, governed separately and always treated separately for so many decades, people could not act together. When the crisis came, they did not know which way to turn, which leader to follow.

Between these two committees stood Pilsudski. Though he was associated with the Austrians, he was

132 no blind Austrophile. He put first, and always first, the claims of Poland. He was a nationalist and wanted a Polish army on Polish soil for an independent Poland. Later he would be ready to play the Partitioning Powers off, one against another. He did not trust their promises.

He thought of himself as Austria's ally, not her slave, not her abject subject. The Austrian military authorities, on the contrary, wanted to include the Legions as an auxiliary force, or—a second suggestion—as part of the *Landsturm* (reserves). Pilsudski would have neither. He would accept no humiliating terms, he would agree to no political conditions, even though he knew that his refusal meant a most unsatisfactory equipment for his men. Better preserve their moral strength, he felt, at the sacrifice of material things—and yet, how necessary for the business in hand the material things were!

Pilsudski and the Legions created a difficult problem for the Austrians. They were a small force whose claims to be a wholly separate group disturbed the unity of the imperial army. Compared with the vast numbers engaged in this general European war, they looked ridiculously small and unimportant. In the first rush, the military authorities were much too busy to pay attention to such a little troop. There were some Austrian officers who saw in the Polish enthusiasm a decided advantage for their side. It was possible that they might rouse the Poles in Russia to rebel against the czar. To others with the typical rigid military mind, the Legions' claims seemed absurd and extravagant. There was irritation on both sides and the friction grew.

The Austrians complained that Pilsudski was far too independent. Some of them called him "an uncertain quantity." They said he was an ardent nationalist, instead of putting first the interests of the Austrian empire. They considered him an irregular, at the head of

a group which did not fit into the traditional military machine—and therefore it was all wrong. Perhaps he was not an easy man to deal with, for he had that Lithuanian obstinacy which made him a pillar of strength to those who relied on him, but was a constant cause of anger to those who did not agree with him. He was the source of great embarrassment to the Austrophiles among the Poles. 133

The Austrians looked askance at the Legions. An irregular force, commanded by a man who had never been trained in military school, who had never served in any army, who had no technical education. A very large number of them were artists and writers. Eighty per cent were university and professional men. Two per cent were under age. Those who had been in the *Strzelec* had about as much training as militia in America, or the Territorials in England before 1914. "Military parvenus," said these regular officers who belonged to regiments with century-old traditions.

They must win the title of real soldiers, not by words, but by deeds, by hard work and iron discipline—and this not in peace times, but in actual war; they must be improvised in action. Slowly the scepticism of some of the Austrian officers, the patronizing contempt of others altered as they proved their worth. By the end of the year the first opinion that they were an undisciplined troop, incapable of a long, serious military effort, had given way before their reputation as first-class soldiers.

Few as they were, badly equipped as they were, they were still a Polish army. If that was important to impress on Austrians and Germans, it was no less important to "put the idea across" to the Poles. The Legions were pioneers who would make it possible to die for Poland, not in Siberia, not in the Citadel, but on the battlefield. They must show their own countrymen that it was sane and reasonable to shed their blood for

134 Poland, not for others; that this was no longer a dream and a fantastic fairy tale.

Moreover, the Legions must learn their own worth. Pilsudski had to defend them at the beginning from external dangers and also from dangers arising from a sense of their inferiority to the troops around them. It was necessary not to wound their ambition, not to destroy their faith in themselves as soldiers. There was but one way to gain that which was most necessary to gain—self-confidence, and that was the test of a fighting unit — battle. It was like passing an examination—extremely dangerous, and only by taking great risks was it possible to win confidence in themselves and the military respect of their allies.

This would not be easy with such equipment as they had, for a reverse seemed more likely than a victory. They had no machine guns and no cannon, they had old-fashioned rifles that fired only one shot with a loading; they had no cartridge pouches, but carried their ammunition in their pockets—easy to lose! They had no overcoats, no boots for long marches. They were dressed in their *Strzelec* uniforms, or some other, bought at their own expense. Not until December were they all put into the gray uniform of the Polish Legions.

Their cavalry had worn out horses, saddles made for hack riding, and long rifles that wounded the backs of their mounts till they bled. They had no baggage wagons and no field kitchens, means permitting troops to carry on a simple living in the country. They had scarcely any telephones, so that they were little groups without cohesion; in critical moments the direction of the whole was greatly complicated.

“Insufficiently armed,” Pilsudski described them, “equipped God knows how, dressed like the devil. From the professional point of view, we formed a detachment not suitable for fighting—or for any military operation demanding several days’ uninterrupted effort.”

But they possessed one thing—high morale. In spite of a thousand difficulties, moral factors enabled them to win out. Pilsudski believed firmly that the most important thing in an army is its morale. He based that of the Legions on military ambition and a sentiment of national pride. It was marked by three things: a profound love for their Commander and absolute devotion to him; a sense of the nobility of their mission, of their patriotic ideals—every man considered himself as the champion of the independence of Poland; and a love of risk, responsibility, initiative, with a dash of prudence that kept them from becoming too adventurous.

There was an underlying reason for this high morale. Troops are worth exactly what their chief is worth in their eyes. And the Legions were led by Pilsudski. Like Garibaldi, he was himself a standard around which the men rallied.

A most unusual spirit reigned among them. Officers and men, they were all soldiers together, animated by the same zeal.

"You are all equal," the Commander had said in the beginning, "in the face of the sacrifices ahead of you. You are all soldiers. I do not confer grades. I order the most experienced among you to exercise the functions of chiefs. The officers' insignia—these you will win in battle. Each one of you can become an officer; just as each one of you—which God forbid!—can go back to the ranks."

Officers or private soldiers, they were all Legionaries, brothers in camp, in battle, in hospital. The Legions developed a splendid system of looking after their men.

"I was severely wounded and sent to a military hospital in Krakow," related a Polish officer. "I was only a private then. The Legions sent me flowers, special food, plenty of money for the little wants a man has in hospital. The Austrian soldiers in my ward couldn't

136 understand it. It was unheard of in the Austrian army that officers thought about private soldiers."

On that sixth of August Pilsudski had said to his chief of staff, "Death or great fame awaits us." Personally he believed they would win death rather than fame. They never had the opportunity to carry out some great exploit and win renown. They were assigned little tasks, important only as they fitted into the big plans that controlled the whole eastern front. They secured little newspaper publicity abroad. Western readers were not greatly concerned in what a handful of Poles were doing, when every day great headlines told of the Germans' advance across Belgium toward Paris, of the battle of the Marne, and the details of trench warfare when that was brand new and every item interesting. Indeed Polish newspapers in America had a most difficult time to get any information about Pilsudski's activities, for the whole four years of the war.

But there exists a very full account of those first months of the Legions. To fill the long days of his detention at Magdeburg, Pilsudski wrote a minute account of three incidents in which he and his men took part on their sector of the eastern front. It is a first-person account that reminds one of Cæsar's *Commentaries* and the *Anabasis*; yet it is more, for it gives military details and is also a psychological study of a commander who had then the leisure to review those weeks of warfare and criticize his own actions. It has a double value—historical and autobiographical. Its sincerity is evident, for it was written with no thought of publication. It is most delightful reading and is proof of the variety of Pilsudski's talents—he used the pen as well as the sword.

More and more men had joined the Legions. They were nearly five thousand when they took the oath of loyalty to Austria, early in September. They wore a distinguishing badge with the initial letters of the Latin

words, *Legio Polska*, J. P. for their beloved Commander, and two Polish words meaning "for the gift of manly courage." The Austrian authorities suspected Pilsudski and refused to allow him to command the Legions. They split his little force up into two brigades and limited him to the first. He had then only two regiments—six battalions. Was there ever in history another brigade like this famous First Brigade of the Legions? Perhaps Cæsar's tenth legion can be compared with it, perhaps the old soldiers of Napoleon.

It had boys of sixteen—one of only fifteen—and graybeards of sixty. It had Christians and Jews. It had illiterate peasants and famous writers, painters, engineers, doctors. It had factory workers and members of the oldest aristocratic families—among the aides of the Commander were Potocki, Radziwill, Dzieduszycki, Sulistrowski, Olszamowski, Sapieha, a list that sounds like a *Social Register* of Poland. They had come from Austrian Poland and Russian Poland and German Poland, but they were all Poles—the living proof of the existence of a nation. They shared Pilsudski's ideals of independence. They believed with him in victory.

Some battalions of infantry, a small detachment of cavalry, some artillery—not a large group. They came to know each other well. The Commander also learned to know them well, knew how much he could demand of them. It was not an easy training they went through, but today to belong to the First Brigade is a better recommendation in Poland than any rank or title. To Pilsudski it was a school for active faith in Poland's independence. Later the words "First Brigade" became a synonym for pioneering patriotism.

Their active part in the fighting came very soon. It was an inspiration to Pilsudski.

"I do not know," he writes, "what the first contact with war held for others, but for me it had as much moving poetry as my first youthful love affair, my first kisses."

Their first fighting was a skirmish with some squadrons of Russian cavalry who retreated. The Legions' reputation went up with a bound. The story went the rounds that Pilsudski had inflicted a tremendous defeat on the Russians; the enemy grew to a whole division, and a week later to two.

But after the march forward and a first success, the Austrians met with enormous losses and retreated along the whole eastern front, before the advancing Russians. The first section of *Moje Pierwsze Boje* (My First Battles), as the memoirs of the Commander were called in book form, is the story of their retreat toward Krakow; a difficult manouever from the technical point of view, and a painful one from the moral point of view, because it spelled defeat for the Austrian armies. It was a most bitter thing for Pilsudski—this long retreat; it made him angry and anxious lest the Austrian forces be driven clear out of the country. Would they then be forced to defend alien soil—say at Prague? or Vienna? He determined to avert that tragedy and if the worst came to the worst, to die with his men defending Poland in a hopeless struggle. He even went so far as to choose mentally a place in the mountains in southwest Poland where the Legions would make a last stand. Fortunately things changed for the better.

The Austrians didn't make it easy for the Polish troops. Before they sent modern rifles, some general at Vienna sent to Pilsudski a great supply of black and yellow badges, the Hapsburg colors, which the men were to wear to show that they were a part of the *Landsturm*; but no other unit in the Austrian army had them. The badges were never distributed. Later on when repeating rifles were given to the Legions, very little ammunition accompanied them.

Asked to defend a sector near the Vistula when the river was rising rapidly, his men toiled all one cold day against great obstacles, crossing on an antiquated

ferry because they had no pontoons. Late at night—so late that he found the Austrian general in bed—Pilsudski learned that there were pontoons nearby.

Rumors were flying about that the Russians would push on and take Krakow. He never lost his courage and kept his good humor. He could even joke with his friends about getting an Austrian decoration.

He learned, during those first months, the loneliness of leadership. The essence of a commander's work was danger and uncertainty, perpetual contradictions impossible to reconcile, which must be cut, like a Gordian knot, by the sword of a sharp decision and orders. Often the means he employed were boldness and tenacity—qualities which were his and which he passed on to his subordinates.

At the battle of Demblin in October (the Russian name Ivangorod is better known in books about the war) the Legions had their first taste of a big modern battle with heavy artillery. They bore themselves very well, though four days of it strained their nerves and tired them physically; the more since they had no sleep at nights in the autumn chill. For the first time they had heavy losses.

But they showed themselves good soldiers, a valued force—and they had had no long preparation, no training outside the war area. Was it at this time, or later, that a German officer appealed to headquarters in these remarkable words?

"Please send at once, to strengthen the front lines, a battalion of the Polish *Strzelec*—or a Hungarian regiment—or an Austrian division." No one questioned now their courage or their military value. They had proved that Poles could fight.

On the eastern front, where cavalry played an important role, where fighting methods were very different from those then coming into vogue in the west, Pilsudski and the Legions had various experiences and ad-

140 ventures which created once more a Polish tradition. He knew how to command, to take risks—not only risks of his life, but risks of his cause. Only by risking could his men gain self-confidence and utter trust in him. He shared their daily life and learned from actual experience how important it was that they should have their food, and still more their sleep. It was he who missed both food and sleep, to avoid wearing the men down by taking excessive precautions.

“During the war,” he writes in the first pages of *My First Battles*, “I often had to consider how far to guard against hypothetical actions. At war a man is never really quite safe; the enemy is always in a position to give him trouble in some degree. In such cases various remedial measures always come into one’s mind, and I invariably had a short conflict with myself as to whether I should take them. Every such measure must cost the soldier labor and some expense of nervous energy. During the war I have so often seen a lack of economy in this regard, and a frivolous waste of the soldiers’ energy and nerves for the peace of mind of the commander. For this reason I am glad that from the beginning of the war, I always successfully overcame the temptation to take measures against every possible surprise. I almost always decided in favor of the soldiers’ nerves, and not in favor of my own.”

Pilsudski’s account of those first months of the Legions in the field is not full of complaints, as might be expected. Here and there is a simple statement of fact that implies how difficult things were, when they might have been made easy—or at any rate easier. Austrian and German soldiers were billeted in the town or in cottages in the villages, while the Poles could build fires to keep warm and sleep out of doors. From the moment they met the enemy, their rifles gave him superiority in arms. They had to make use of every bit of woods to balance the advantages of quick and long-range firing.

For one attack they had eight old-fashioned, short-range cannon that used smoking powder and jumped at every shot; to utilize them at all it was necessary to plan a night assault when the Russians might think them

respectable artillery. The Austrian staff maps were twenty years old—or more. When he was actually on the ground, Pilsudski found the shape of the woods different here, villages missing there, and roads going in the wrong direction.

Perhaps the most dramatic of their adventures was Ulina Mala (Oo-lee'-nah Mah'-lah). They were tired when it began, for they'd had almost no sleep for two nights. When the Commander wanted to send a last report to his superior, officer after officer fell asleep as he tried to write. It deserved to be called an adventure, for the Polish battalions, on their way to Krakow, marched boldly through the Russian front at night. Pilsudski went on foot at the head of the column which was a kilometer long. A strange sight, he describes it, the gray line of two thousand men winding along over the equally gray earth, in utter silence. To avoid a village that might be sheltering Russian patrols they left the highroad and climbed a hill, then down a very steep slope into a deep ravine, and a long time spent getting through it—at least two and a half kilometers, the most exciting part of this romantic journey. They left the ravine, going up a slope so steep that they went on hands and knees—how would the horses manage it?

They cut across plowed fields where their tired feet struggled clumsily with the furrows. Suddenly coming on a cottage, they woke the inmates up and demanded a guide—a professional smuggler, Pilsudski decided, he was so delighted to help them through the Russian lines. Between two villages they slipped, crossed the highroad without being discovered, and passing between the vanguard of a Russian regiment and the regiment itself, took refuge in a wood. There they stayed for an hour and a half, the men resting, behaving like jolly school children on an outing, the Commander getting a nap of fifteen minutes. They were only a few hundred yards from a Russian detachment.

Then on again, and before they reached Krakow they had captured twenty prisoners and some horses. Pilsudski was so weary two aides had to support him when they rode into the city. When he left for the war, he had hesitated to take the command as he had a weak heart. At Ulina Mala he had no sleep for three days—unless you count two little naps—and stood a thirty kilometer march over plowed fields, to say nothing of the mental strain.

He analyzes the reasons for their success: the enemy patrols functioned badly, at night the Russians kept guard badly; the natives of this district were friendly and did not betray them; the Legions' morale was splendid—with bad troops he could never have won through. It was a risk they took, a mad risk, and when Pilsudski thought it over calmly, some years afterward, he had the feeling that Ulina Mala was a fairy tale from the *Arabian Nights*.

They had left the Austrian army behind and by a night march come to Ulina.

"Every one felt an eerie atmosphere," he says, "and even with the least developed imagination must have felt the breath of death and destruction on his face. Yet during the whole time there was never a quiver in their morale, a failure of discipline or an outbreak of depression. Orders were carried out quietly, without murmur or complaint. In the course of the whole march I had no stragglers, although it was very fatiguing even for trained troops. For the greater part of the way we were not on hard road, but struggling over plowed fields. That was no small trial for the best of troops!

"Moreover, my confidence in the soldier and his moral qualities played a great part in our success. With other soldiers I should not have dared to take such a risk. I suppose that the steadiness of the soldiers' spirit must have rested to a considerable extent on a reciprocal feeling amongst them, on confidence in myself."

He points out frankly the mistakes he made, basing his decision on a false hypothesis and so falling into a trap. He grants it was a big risk, which ended happily for the Legions. The result was that he had confidence

in himself, and the men trusted him implicitly. No wonder that he called it an escapade on which he always looked back with pride and joy. 143

"Joy because I have rarely passed through such experiences during war and never risked so much on a single card to achieve my aim, as I did on November ninth. I do not wish to be misunderstood. It is not a matter of risk for risk's sake, of taking pleasure in risk; but war and all the phenomena of war are connected with risk, not only with the physical risk of death, which is the soldier's, but also the risk of losing, of not reaching the object aimed at, which is the commander's. And if providence has not allotted me the risk of great military undertakings, yet on my own scale I risked at Ulina almost everything. For the object that I deemed worthy, I risked on the card of my science and my capacity, in a word of myself, almost all that was dearest to me—what I considered to be the nucleus of the Polish army.

"I look upon Ulina with pride because, having taken an entirely independent decision without responsibility before anyone, I did not withdraw from my undertaking before the end, in spite of the difficulties which piled themselves up at every step, and the risk which increased every moment to impossibility. I confess frankly that it was only after Ulina that I began to have confidence in myself and belief in my powers."

One result of that fantastic expedition was a widespread impression among the Poles that with Pilsudski all was possible. It was like an examination that the chief had to pass before himself and before his men. He passed with a "five." Often after that risky exploit he would hear the soldiers say, "Now we will follow the Commander to the end of the world. If he got us out of Ulina, we can be tranquil."

The next adventure he writes of is Limanowa-Marcinkowice (Lee-mah-no'-vah—Mar-sin-ko-veet'-seh) which began with a little incident that made a great reputation for the Legions. Evening came early in the mountains in November. As usual, the Austrians had billeted their men and horses in the village and there was no room left for the Poles. Pilsudski sent one battalion to a nearby village, warning them to take a local guide and to be ready to fight with the Russians for their night's rest. Led by some mountaineers, they sur-

144 rounded the village skillfully and captured a whole squadron of the Russian cavalry, with five officers.

In the state of "nerves" of the eastern front at that time, this success was a triumph without an equal. Capturing an entire squadron did not happen every day, and this had occurred under the eyes of a whole cavalry corps. The triumph became so much the greater when questioning of the prisoners disclosed the fact that these were picked men, chosen from a whole regiment, given the best horses, and sent in advance with a large number of officers to verify vague rumors as to the movements of the Austrian troops. No wonder the Austrian division commander was a little jealous.

Pilsudski who had not been present, invited the five Russian officers to supper and over a glass of vodka heard their story. They were not careful—there would be no night attack, as it was unusually cold and dark; they thought no Austrians were near. Their men were scattered in several villages. Shots rang out. Then they heard voices swearing in Russian. They stopped a return fire, thinking that of course the men speaking were their comrades—it was a perfect Russian accent. Then the Legionaries swept down like a flood, with fixed bayonets, and they had to surrender.

"I thought," adds Pilsudski, "I should die of suppressed laughter when I heard the real cause of our success."

From other prisoners he learned later that the Russian general at the head of that division was furious and said, "If my officers can't lead squadrons, I fear I shall have to ride out on patrol myself." And the story was that with the first patrol he actually did ride out against the enemy.

Pilsudski had a servant at headquarters, a Russian who had been captured and begged to be kept, instead of being sent to the prisoners' camp. When the Russian officers were coming to supper, the Commander thought



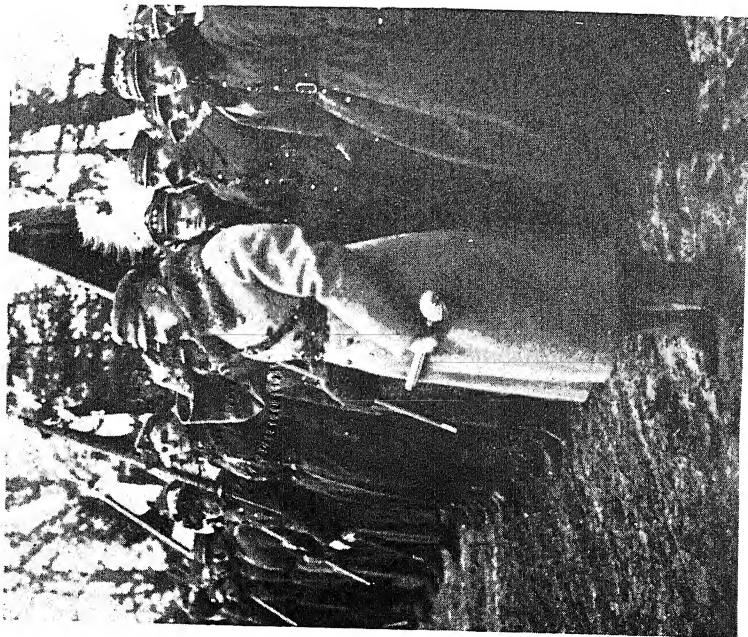
PILSUDSKI, COMMANDER OF THE 1ST BRIGADE OF THE LEGIONS, SHARED ALL THE LIFE OF HIS MEN AT THE FRONT.
Photo-Plat



THE COMMANDER ON HIS FAVORITE HORSE, THE FAMOUS CHESTNUT KASZTANKA, WITH HER FOUR WHITE STOCKINGS.



PILSUDSKI IN 1919, WEARING THE PLAIN GRAY COAT OF THE LEGIONS, WITH NO INSIGNIA ON COLLAR OR SHOULDER OR SLEEVE.
Rozanski



MARCH, 1920. PILSUDSKI REVIEWS THE ARMY, HOLDING FOR THE FIRST TIME THE SILVER BATON OF A MARSHAL OF POLAND.

he would want to go with them. But he pleaded with Pilsudski to be allowed to stay, and please not to speak to him in Russian before the guests. The man was delighted, he said, to be with the Legions; he had never seen such a general, who neither struck nor found fault, and with whom every one could talk freely, without fear.

The capture of that squadron had one happy result. A Hungarian general, commander of the whole front near Limanowa, called on Pilsudski to congratulate him, and asked some questions about the state of the Legions. He threw up his hands in amazement when he learned that they had no machine guns, no telephones, not sufficient equipment. He promised to do what he could, and meanwhile assigned some machine guns and mountain artillery from his own force to the Polish detachment.

A little incident with the Hungarian officers thus put under his command shows Pilsudski's tact and constant thought for the welfare of his subordinates. The newcomers were afraid, in the company of infantry, of losing their artillery and machine guns; so all night the horses were kept saddled and most of the men on their feet. When this continued, the Commander became angry; for there were two things he would not have—"nerves," and, a result of "nerves," maintaining units in a constant tension of readiness and alarm. He summoned the Hungarians and began with the usual orders and estimate of the situation.

It was, he went on, the duty of officers not only to lead their subordinates in battle with intelligence and courage, but to see to it that their soldiers were as strong as possible physically and well rested before the fight. He therefore forbade the maintenance of any state of alarm without his orders. Horses were to be unsaddled at night. The men not on duty were to sleep. He would answer for the security and entirety of the detachment, and they could be confident that in case of real danger they would be warned in time. They were a little surprised and dis-

146 quieted, but said nothing. They obeyed his orders without murmuring.

A week later, when they had been through some difficult experiences, one of the Hungarians thanked Pilsudski, saying that for almost the first time in the war, he and his men and his horses were properly rested in spite of the work they had done.

"I learned," he added gratefully, "to chuck off my boots at night like your officers, and even acquired the necessary confidence to undress in order to sleep."

"Since I have been with you," said another Hungarian, "I have not once mounted my horse unnecessarily. That is very pleasant."

Lastly, *My First Battles* tells of Marcinkowice, near the Dunajec river and its wooded hills. Pilsudski had two thousand men, the Russians ten thousand, perhaps twelve, with a large number of machine guns and batteries of artillery. They were beginning an attack on a larger scale; not, as Pilsudski thought, retreating. For sixteen hours the Poles held up almost a whole division of the enemy, as they learned afterwards from prisoners, and thus gained time for reinforcements to come up on the Austrian side. The Austrian general reported to Vienna that the Legions fought valiantly and effectively, those two days early in December.

What a pity Pilsudski didn't carry out his original plan and write of a fourth episode! The book makes such interesting reading, with its thrilling stories, its description of the painful psychological work which precedes the giving of orders, and its frequent touches of humor—when they took fresh bread all the women of a village had been ordered to make for the Russians; when at Ulina Mala, smoking strictly forbidden, he and his staff looked at the maps very often, that being an excuse for a light behind some shelter, and there smoked cigarettes with ineffable pleasure, the Commander remembering how, when a young schoolboy, he used to smoke in secret.

Coupled with the humorous touches are little hints that Pilsudski was confident he would come through the war unscathed. When his chestnut mare, Kasztanka (Kash-tan'-kah—the word means “chestnut”), was frightened by a noisy, rattling motor truck, he spoke soothingly to her.

“Silly thing, you’re not in the country, instead you are in Krakow. Be tranquil. On you I’ll enter Wilno.” Which came true. Kasztanka, a beautiful horse with four white stockings, was a popular figure in the Legions and later all over the country, sharing with the Commander the “taking of the salute” at many reviews in the reborn Poland.

He was drinking a glass of milk at Marcinkowice when information came indicating that he had sent his detachment of cavalry to almost certain death, instead of the easy capture of a Russian baggage column. A few hours later the men turned up, having had a hot fight with artillery, not a baggage train, and escaping by riding into the Dunajec river (this in December!) in little groups and swimming across under a hail of bullets. When he was Chief of State, Pilsudski went on purpose to Marcinkowice, ordering a glass of milk to be ready on his arrival. That one he could finish drinking.

My First Battles shows too Pilsudski’s remarkable knowledge of Polish history. He refers to Kosciuszko’s stay in one obscure village where they were. Several times he refers casually to 1863 leaders who had made their last stand in these wooded districts in the south of Poland. He wanted to avoid giving the natives, during the retreat toward Krakow, the impression that the Legions were fugitives of ’63, repeating that failure in the twentieth century.

There are also casual references to other campaigns and generals, that show his wide reading of military history and his keen study of strategy—references to Napoleon and his generals, to the Russian-Japanese war, to

18 the Balkan war. These are the more remarkable, since he was quite alone during the writing of the book, shut off from any reference volumes and from all sources of information.

The book has then many good points and is thoroughly interesting, but its greatest value is that it is a study of Pilsudski's own psychology, a deep self-probing into his work as a commander, his mistakes never glossed over but frankly listed, his successes credited in large measure to his men. But it was his personality that called out the devotion of his men, their trust and their love.

The financing of the Legions was no easy task. American Poles sent money. A fund was opened in Krakow to which men, women and children gave whatever they had made of gold and silver—rings especially; in return they received iron rings, lined with a thin veneer of silver, bearing the Polish words that mean "Gold to the nation." It is today a great honor to have such a ring of iron.

Legion expenses were lessened by the splendid help of the Polish women. In August of 1914 the women's groups of the *Strzelec* were mobilized, along with the men. A Woman's Military Assistance League was formed, which grew to twenty-seven thousand members. The First Brigade of the Legions and the Second had women's ambulance corps. There was an organization for Polish prisoners, detained in enemy camps; and yet another called the Polish Medical Aid Committee.

For the first six months of the Legions every one served without pay, though they suffered greatly when they had no tents or no shoes. Then the Austrian authorities ordered that the First Brigade should accept their wages. Every officer, no matter how high his rank, kept one hundred crowns of his monthly salary, and put the balance into a common fund for Pilsudski to use in political work and in recruiting.

The Commander shared with his men all their fortunes, good and bad. He would sleep on the rough floors of peasant houses. His food was of the coarsest. He loved them, and they loved him in return with an almost fanatical love; true of both officers and soldiers. His appearance—in the trenches, in their billets, in hospital, in a dugout—was always greeted with enthusiasm. They would gather around him and he would talk with them, never stiff and formal, but friendly. In his hands weak men became strong soldiers, so that foreign officers were often surprised at their feats.

In the early days of the war, men sometimes grumbled among themselves, complaining of their lack of shoes or clothes; they were about ready to throw it over. Let the Commander come, and not a word was said; did he ask how things were, they would reply, "All right, sir." It was the same with the wounded, they stopped groaning if Pilsudski was near by.

Sometimes the soldiers would say, "Pan Colonel, it is impossible." (Pan is our Mr. plus sir.)

"The Commander wishes—"

"Then we will do it," was the quick answer. The word "Commander" was like magic. Once when the Legions were ordered to hold out, they did hold out though it meant the loss of half their force, because Pilsudski said so; no doubt they would have perished to the last man, but the troops near them retreated and at last they too were ordered to withdraw.

It was his habit, during actual fighting, to stay three or four hundred meters from the front—that is, from the firing line itself. When Russian officers were taken prisoner and led before him, they refused to answer his questions, saying this was not the general, as they could not believe so high a commander would be in such an exposed place, or live in a dugout under shrapnel fire. When his close friends objected to his staying in the first line, he would say, "You mustn't criticise your chief. I am only

150 the leader of a tiny force and can't play the role of a general of a great army."

He knew well the psychological effect of the enemy's artillery and machine guns, when technically the Legions were so deficient. It was therefore the more important to keep cool and steady. He never could bear "nerves" and schooled himself to a discipline of calm—perhaps, he confesses, sometimes exaggerated. There were countless stories about him.

An aide, newly appointed, was sent by the Commander to carry an order to the trenches. Not far away, across the river, were the Russians and their sharpshooters fired at him. As he crossed a certain open space, the bullets whistled by him. When he returned that evening he spoke of his experience and his comrades chaffed him. The next afternoon Pilsudski, who had probably heard the teasing, accompanied the new aide. When they reached the open space, shots were fired as before. The man was very scared—for himself, and very worried for the Commander. But Pilsudski stopped, opened his cigarette case, and asked calmly, "Haven't you a match?" It was windy and the match went out, thus prolonging the time they stood there under fire. The Commander was in no hurry. Fortunately the soldiers in the trenches recognized him at that moment, saw the danger, and all of them opened fire on the bushes, silencing the sharpshooters.

He left the dugout one night to question some prisoners. The Russians "spotted" them and opened fire. The prisoners started to run away, but he shouted at them, and they were so afraid of him that they stood still, though shrapnel was falling all around them and some of them were hit. The aide begged him to return to safety in the dugout, but Pilsudski scolded him and went on calmly questioning the Russians.

A legend quickly grew up in the Legions that bullets could not hit him. They all believed it. Once a private soldier ran away from the Austrian army and came to

the Polish troops; asked why he had done that, he replied that he didn't want to be killed and he would surely be safe with Pilsudski. 151

Indeed he himself believed that he could not be hit. He was always absolutely sure he would come through safely. When shots were falling so close that it was really dangerous and the officers lay down on the ground, he would remain standing, saying calmly, "Never mind. Bullets can't touch me."

During a great Russian offensive, the Legions' sector was attacked by terrible artillery fire. Early one morning a hundred and twenty guns were aimed at this part of the front lines. At noon the Commander announced that he was going down to the trenches to verify the effects of that firing and ask about the morale of the men. With his aides he went through the forest on horseback, then on foot. The first trenches were a hell after all that shrapnel fire. As Pilsudski neared the dugout, the Russians suddenly shifted their guns and began firing at another place. This added to the legend.

"Where he is, there will be victory," was another of their sayings. And "If he wants something, fate wants it!" And "When all the brigades of the Legions are together, everything goes well." Often in the hospital he would touch men with infectious diseases, but never got them himself. Sometimes a man would say, "Now I can die in peace because the Commander has blessed me."

The Legions had many songs, generally old tunes with new words. There was a special marching song, for though there was no real band, they often sang if they were far from the enemy. In the early days of the war the favorite was

"Hail, our *Strzelec!*
Over us the white eagle."

Sometimes the people of a district were won over to their side when they heard the soldiers singing. There was a

152 merry atmosphere in the evening when the day's work was over—music and gaiety.

There was a special song too for the First Brigade. Pilsudski liked it very much and called it "the proudest song ever composed in Poland." In a rough translation the lines are:

The Legions—a soldier's song;
The Legions—fate of the lost;
The Legions—a soldier's pride and scorn;
The Legions giving their lives in sacrificial fire.

and the refrain:

We, the First Brigade,
We, the *Strzelec* group,
Have thrown our lives to destiny's stake.

They told us we were crazy,
Because they did not believe that to will is to do,
But left alone we persisted.
With us was our dear leader.

From you no recognition do we need,
Neither tears nor words.
No appeals to empty hearts
Nor to brainless heads.

But the Legions were only a tiny part of the nation which remained passive. Here is Pilsudski's comment, spoken some years later at a reunion of his soldiers:

"The decision of all the Poles was surprisingly the same. They decided to submit to the destiny of war, and having rendered to God what is God's—a sigh—to render to Cæsar what is Cæsar's—their lives and property, to submit passively to their respective foreign governments. All three parts of the country gave recruits, thus increasing their ranks.

"But we solved the question differently. We tried to represent Poland on the battlefield. Was it possible to give a military force, composed of a chief and soldiers, to a nation without a state? We overlooked quantity. Our sword was small, not worthy of a large nation, but this was not our fault, but the nation's, waiting in passive neutrality for some guarantee given it by others."

The three Partitioners all wanted help from the Poles and promised this and that in exchange for their support.

Pilsudski argued that their promises were worthless, since they might not survive the war. But the people thought each of their conquerors full of love for Poland and their promises worth accepting.

To awaken them, to make them take part in his activities, to rouse them to believe that independence was possible to achieve, Pilsudski sent twenty experienced Legion officers into Russian Poland to recruit for his army and to organize secret groups of Poles. They were called the P.O.W.—the initial letters of the words meaning “Polish Military Organization.” It was to cooperate with the Legions when that should prove practical, but to remain quite independent of them; an organization that could not be interfered with by the Austrians. On the surface it was to be inconspicuous. It was destined to become so strong numerically and so efficient that it had an important place in the story of Pilsudski—and of Poland. It began very early in the war—in November of 1914. For the first eight months recruits had to be smuggled through the lines of two fighting armies to reach the Commander.

At Christmas time the Legions took part in a three days’ battle south of Tarnow and then were sent back of the lines for a rest. They returned to the front and took part in the offensive following a great German victory in May of 1915.

On the anniversary of their crossing the frontier into Russian Poland, the first day of the war, Pilsudski issued an order to the Legions:

August 6, 1915.

Soldiers,

A year ago I began the war with a little handful of ill-equipped men. At that time the whole world had sprung to arms. I did not wish it to be possible that, when the new frontiers of states and nations were to be hacked out with swords on the living body of our country, Poles alone should stand aside. Nor, when the swords had been thrown into the scales of Fate trembling above our heads, did I wish to permit the Polish saber to be absent.

That our saber was small, that it was not worthy of a great nation of twenty millions, was not our fault. The na-

tion did not follow us; it had not the courage to look tremendous events in the eyes and waited in passive "neutrality" for somebody's "guarantee."

Soldiers! You went forth at my orders without hesitation, without a moment's thought whether your fate would not be the same as that of so many generations of Polish soldiers that have gone before us. Your country had no happiness to defend, you went forth to defend its honor.

A year has passed. We have created from among us a new type of soldier such as Poland did not know before. Our most essential work is not bravura or military glitter, but an admirable quiet and calm in our toil without regard for the difficulties that come up. Among us a boy quickly turns into a quiet, steady old soldier, prepared for long laborious toil and not consumed like straw in the first little blaze.

Soldiers and comrades-in-arms! A year has passed, a year of heavy toil, blocked by so many difficulties that we are astonished to be still in existence, astonished too that our native forests have not long since murmured a requiem over us, the Polish soldiers of the Great War of 1914-15.

And now, after a year of war, as at its beginning, we are only Poland's vanguard in arms, as also its moral vanguard, in that we know how to risk all when risk is necessary.

Soldiers! Today, after a year of war and toil, I am sad that I cannot congratulate you on tremendous triumphs, but I am proud that with greater assurance today than a year ago, I can call to you as in the past: "Forward, boys! Be it to death or life, to victory or defeat, go, awaken Poland to resurrection by deeds of war."

J. Pilsudski

Ozarow, near Lubatow.

That first year of fighting on the eastern front had brought a new glory to the Polish sword. Pilsudski was an example of quiet strength. He educated both officers and soldiers to calmness. In military affairs he made a reputation for the originality of his plans, for unexpected manouvers that took the enemy by surprise, for a quickness of movement that made his attack irresistible.

The Legions had increased in number. A Third Brigade was organized in 1915. In the early months of that year Pilsudski was in favor of an energetic campaign for recruits in that part of Russian Poland then occupied by the Austrians. By August he had changed his mind. The military situation, and consequently the political situation were altering constantly; that meant for the Poles frequent shifting in their orientation toward the Central Powers. The German advance had pushed the Russians

back and they were evacuating Congress Kingdom. Again Austria found the Poles a problem presenting fresh difficulties as well as great possibilities. They could settle the Polish question by making a new state out of Russian Poland and Austrian Poland, a state that would, of course, be under the Hapsburgs. To this scheme Germany would not agree, lest it encourage her own Polish subjects to resist germanization.

The Legions were fighting on the side of the Central Powers, but the whole situation had changed since the outbreak of the war. Germans and Austrians together had beaten the Russians and were pushing them back. In June of 1915 the Central Powers took Lwow (Lemberg). Early in August the Germans entered Warsaw. By the end of the month they had captured the last Russian fort on the Vistula. In September they were in Wilno. The beginning of autumn saw Russian Poland no longer in the hands of the Russians.

At the middle of August Pilsudski gave a secret command to take no more recruits for the Legions. That was his answer to Austria's silence on the subject of Polish aspirations. He saw clearly that every Polish soldier who became the ally of Germany and Austria would later on be missing from the ranks of the free Polish army. He felt that the promises of the Central Powers could not be trusted and declared that "to send fresh recruits to the Legions would be contrary to the honor and dignity of the nation, contrary to its interests." He offered instead another service—young men should go into the legendary P.O.W. which was growing apace, working on both sides of the front, financed by his officers who voluntarily took less pay.

The Legions, said Pilsudski, were the first part of the future independent Polish army, necessary and important, to fight at the front with Polish bayonets; and the P.O.W. was the second part, just as necessary and important. When the Germans occupied Warsaw in August of

156 1915, a large group of P.O.W.—Russian Poles—could go openly to join the Legions. They were all mobilized, but instead of marching out, to the bitter disappointment of many of them, half their force received orders to stay in Warsaw, still in civilian clothes, and go on with the work of organization.

Every man wanted to get into uniform, to go to reinforce the First Brigade. At home they would have no outward show, no fighting against the enemy. Their military training was all to be in secret. They were to declare war on passivity and educate the people to the idea of renewed efforts for the independence of Poland. They were to be the chain necessary in every war—a secret intelligence service in the rear of the Russian armies. Looking far ahead, Pilsudski visualized them as his thoroughly organized army of reserves, ready when he should need them. Being mortals, they did not esteem their role, but regarded it as a heavy duty, to be ended as soon as possible.

They worked in unusually difficult conditions. Every P.O.W. member ran a personal risk. If discovered, they were considered spies; and some dozens of them, including several women, were shot for treason by the Russians.

Here is one of the messages the Commander sent to them:

"I know the conditions of your work. It is easy to be unnerved. Calm and inner balance are absolutely essential to carry on military work. You need calm and nerves of steel, more than active soldiers. If I made what was impossible—an army without professionally trained officers and soldiers, I must create a second impossibility—the secret army of conspiracy."

Advancing slowly but steadily eastward, the Legions were in seven battles. In one of them, Jastkow, one regiment lost twenty-eight officers and four hundred men in two days. Pilsudski sent for the colonel and announced his great displeasure at such bad planning and unneces-

sary loss of life. By September they were across the river Bug and reached Kowel. 157

In this district, in the summer of 1916, the three brigades of the Legions were united—for the first time. Here they had several weeks of cruel battles—their hardest fighting of the war, which added greatly to their prestige. There the new Russian offensive struck with full force. Pilsudski followed it very painstakingly on his military maps and was greatly interested in its strategy. He worked out the plans for a counter-offensive, “of which,” he said jokingly, “Hindenburg himself should take advantage.”

At the middle of July he decided to resign from the command of the First Brigade.

“I have ceased to believe that I contribute to the common interest of Austria and Poland. I am obliged to be disloyal to one or the other, for a continual contradiction arises. I can not continue submitting my conscience to such a struggle.”

The Austrians did not accept his resignation for two months, and then only because the Germans, uneasy about his influence, urged it. The Legions were transferred to the German east front.

This act of their Commander caused great emotion among the soldiers. It was due to both military and political causes. There were no more Russians on Polish soil. The Partitioners were no longer three, but only two. It was time to right about face and turn on them. A formal resignation released him from his oath of loyalty to Austria and left him free.

He had gone into the war to fight against Russia, the principal enemy of Poland. He was not fighting in defense of Austrian or German interests. He knew only one cause—Poland's. Now with Russia gone, he saw a new danger: that his country might be sacrificed for Germany's plans. Early in the occupation of Warsaw, he journeyed secretly to the city to warn the Poles not to be

158 too enthusiastic over German promises and so give themselves to the German cause.

"Don't imagine you will have an easier time with the Russians gone. It will be harder for you. Beware of the middle people who make friends with the Germans."

Both friends and enemies charged him with inconsistency. He started the war with the Austrian army, and now he was resigning his commission. They could not see that he was consistent in his inconsistency, that his sentiment for Poland was his one passion. His aim remained always the same, but when circumstances changed and made necessary a different method to attain that aim, he did not hesitate.

It was shortly after those hard weeks of fighting that Pilsudski sent a second anniversary order to his soldiers:

ORDER TO THE LEGION

Soldiers,

Two years have passed since August 6th, 1914, a date memorable in our hearts, when our hands raised upon Polish soil the long forgotten standard of Polish soldiers fighting in defense of their country. When I went into the field at your head I was quite aware of the vast obstacles in our way. When I led you out from the walls of Krakow, which did not trust your strength, when I entered with you the towns and townships of the Kingdom (Congress Kingdom, the center of the three divisions of Russian Poland), I always saw before me a ghost, risen from the graves of our fathers and grandfathers, the ghost of the soldiers without a country.

The future will show whether we too shall remain in history as such, whether we shall only leave after us:

The short weeping of women,

And long tales told by kinsmen through the night.

But today when we go into battle, we have a treasure to defend which is incontestably our own conquest. The soldiers of all brigades have torn from a hostile fate, in hard fight and by sacrifice of blood, that which we did not yet possess when we went forth to the war—the honor of a Polish soldier, whose valor and internal discipline no longer admit of any doubt.

As long as I am at your head I will defend to the uttermost and without counting the cost that which we possess and must hand untarnished to our successors, our honor as Polish soldiers. This I also demand of you, soldiers, with the utmost rigor. Whether under fire in the battlefield or in contact with the general public, officers and men must so be-

have that they in no way harm the honor of the uniform they wear and the honor of the standard that unites us. For this end sacrifices must be made, both those that cost blood and those that do not. Two years have passed. The fate of our country still hangs in the balance. Permit me to wish you and myself that on our next anniversary my order may be read to free Polish soldiers on free Polish soil.

This order to be read in the companies, squadrons, batteries and other establishments of the unit.

J. Pilsudski

Kolonja Dubniak,
August 6, 1916.

His wish was destined not to come true. On the third anniversary the Commander was not with the Legions, but in prison.

The Central Powers were winning on the eastern front. The Germans occupied Warsaw, the Austrians Lwow and Lublin. But the war was not yet over in the west, and the outcome began to look doubtful. Germany needed more men and Ludendorff wanted to raise an army in Russian Poland, where he knew mobilization had been far from complete, as the Russians had left hurriedly. A million young men of the right age were available, according to their estimates. They could surely count on eight hundred thousand. How best conciliate the Poles?

Von Bessler, the governor-general of Warsaw, discussed this matter with Ludendorff and advised him to take the one necessary step—to give the Poles independence; they were such patriots that if they were given their freedom, those in Russian Poland would enlist and fight on the side of Germany. The Legions had been against Russia, he argued, and therefore they would not go against Germany. The plan was submitted to the Kaiser, who accepted it.

On the fifth of November, 1916, a group of sixty or seventy Polish officials and important civilians were invited to the Zamek (Zah'-mek—the medieval castle that had been the Warsaw residence of the Polish kings, then of the Russian governor, and in turn of a German mili-

160 tary governor) at twelve o'clock. In the famous Hall of Columns the Poles were ranged on one side, the German officials and army officers on the other.

Through the center door where Polish kings used to enter, came Von Bessler and read aloud a proclamation in German, in the name of the kaisers of Germany and Austria, granting independence "to meet the undying wish of the Poles." It was then read in Polish. At the same day and hour the Austrian governor-general was doing the same thing at Lublin. Independence for Russian Poland, a greater measure of autonomy for Austrian Poland. In the next room in the Zamek a band played the Polish national hymn, followed by the German hymn.

Von Bessler expected that this surprise would cause a great demonstration, that all the Poles would be enthusiastic for Germany. No one spoke. The proclamation that was to bring a new army to Ludendorff was quite coldly received. When the invited guests left the Zamek, posters announcing the granting of independence to Poland were being put up on the walls. But there was no enthusiasm. Among the students, all over the city, there were no demonstrations for Germany. Many people considered it a parody of independence.

The next day a second poster appeared in Warsaw, with more promises. We will give an army to the new Polish state—now the Poles can fight under the Polish flag—the Poles who in the past always fought so heroically—and so on. Forty-five recruiting stations were opened in the city. Special privileges were to be given. At the end of one month thirty-five men had presented themselves for this great Polish army, and they applied for the sanitary battalion. It proved impossible to build up an army when the P.O.W. received contrary orders from the Commander.

Von Bessler was in despair. He invited to the Zamek all the Polish officials and representatives of the intelligentsia. He spoke for three-quarters of an hour, saying

that the future of Poland was bound up with western Europe and western culture; therefore Poland should side with Germany and Austria against the Allies; and the only conclusion to be drawn must be that the Poles should give soldiers for the armies of the two kaisers. Instead of a million recruits, or eight hundred thousand, he had thirty-five applicants for the sanitary battalion. Many Germans today say that these proclamations were a great mistake.

A joke went the rounds of the Poles in Warsaw. A man rushes up to an acquaintance on the street and demands, "Where is the nearest recruiting station?" The second man answers, "In Tworki!" (an insane asylum near the city)

The reasons for the Poles' reaction to the proclamation were not far to seek. It did not unite the nation, but perpetuated the division into three parts. The Germans and Austrians declared that for the present they must continue to administer Poland. The frontiers were to be determined later. Whether independence was real or not remained to be seen. They asked for Polish soldiers, taking no steps however to form a Polish government. As soon as the people could see the situation more clearly, their burning patriotism showed itself. The answer was prompt and decisive: Only a Polish government can summon Poles to arms.

The Central Powers were holding out only a prospect of independence. There was some vague talk that Russian Poland might be made a constitutional monarchy, but Germany and Austria could not agree to which of them it should be attached. All discussion of details was shelved—till the end of the war or later.

The Central Powers still hoped for Polish soldiers and created a temporary Council of State, a sop to Cerberus, as it gave the Poles only a few of the instruments of government, a part of the administration of the state, with its authority constantly limited by the military gov-

162 ernment of the German occupation. The Council named Pilsudski head of the military section and in January of 1917 he went to Warsaw to take up this new post.

Naturally Pilsudski and Von Bessler could not agree. The German governor had Germany's interests at heart. The two men had different ideas as to the methods of recruiting and the use of the recruits. Von Bessler was suspicious of this Legionary. The Poles might help Germany and give soldiers, he thought, but this man Pilsudski would not.

Meanwhile Russia was growing weaker and weaker. Disorders were increasing there. Pilsudski tried to come to some understanding with the Allies, but they still believed in Russia. The Revolution there in March (1917) and the fall of the Romanow dynasty changed the whole chessboard of Europe, but nowhere was the outcome so important politically as in Poland. Now, for the first time in many years, the nations of western Europe were free to take up the Polish question, since they were no longer bound by secret agreements and promises to their one-time ally, since they were no longer obliged to consider Russia's interests. Indeed they could now promise much more than Germany and Austria, and fulfill their promises at the cost of the Central Powers.

For Pilsudski and the Legions the Russian Revolution marked a turning point in their policy. It was now time to give their attention to the two remaining Partitioners—Austria and Germany. He was working out a plan to make the Legions independent. He took advantage of the antagonisms that existed and increased between Germany and Austria, to strengthen the P.O.W. which had spread through the entire country. At the beginning it had members on both sides of the front, with a courier service of women volunteers. Every command from Pilsudski, then still at the front, had to be brought through the Austrian lines and also through the Russian lines. Often these women were given difficult work to do;

they destroyed bridges and telegraph lines to delay the German armies, they carried arms and ammunition secretly, they watched the roads, they organized an efficient intelligence service. Later Pilsudski decorated their banner with a *Virtuti Militari* ribbon—and well they deserved that signal honor.

In April of 1917 the Austrian authorities released the Legions, to become the basis of a Polish army; but handed them over not to the Council of State, but to Von Bessler, the governor-general of the German occupation. That meant a military oath to Germany. There were long-drawn-out discussions as to its wording.

Pilsudski reviewed the history of his Legions: the Austrians had tried to incorporate them with the Austrian army. Now they were turned over to the German army. Must the decision about a Polish army always rest with foreigners? Was it really Polish, if it could be Austrian yesterday and German today? The Central Powers were offering him the opportunity to develop his Legions into a national army, of which he should have command—but always under their direction.

On the third of July the form of oath for the Legions and for all the recruits of the new Polish army was at last arranged. No half measures now, no dallying, no possible chance of misunderstanding. This oath definitely and sharply put the Polish army under the German High Command. Pilsudski refused to take it. As a formal protest he and his colleagues resigned from the Council. He knew what might result—a prison sentence.

His refusal was a risk. Russia was not wholly out of the picture, but was preparing an offensive. Germany might yet win the war. Either of these possibilities might mean that his act would be fatal for Poland. But he was used to risks.

The ninth of July was set as the day for the Legions to take the military oath to Germany. They then numbered about fourteen thousand men, of whom six thou-

164 sand were Russian subjects and eight thousand Austrian. A deputation of the officers went up to Warsaw to see the Commander, to ask his permission to refuse to take the oath. They laid the case before him. Officers and men alike, they had all declared that they did not want to take it. They would resist, arms in their hands. They had been warned that refusing meant being disarmed and imprisoned. The only answer had been a single cry of rage. Give up their arms? Never, never! If the Germans wanted them, they must take them by force. Did the Commander approve?

A hard decision to make. He knew his men. The First Brigade meant just what it said. Resisting would be madness. There must be no unnecessary bloodshed now, for later on every man would be needed. To sacrifice such men as these would be too great a loss for Poland.

There was a second reason: there must be no open fight with Germany. It was not yet time for that, and he felt that the people as a whole would not rise to support the Legions. Their revolt would be only a pretext for making the community suffer, for destroying the country—as in the case of Belgium.

"I won't give you the permission," he answered slowly. "It is hard for me to say this. Three years you have fought, have carried your arms honorably. Today there is no need to prove your courage. Men who have risked their lives and shed their blood for Poland can also grit their teeth and go to prison for Poland."

For the third time Pilsudski deliberately broke the organization he had made. Truly, a hard decision. From this moment he became a great national hero.

Later some one described to the Commander the scene at one camp when two officials arrived from Warsaw to administer the oath. The eighteen hundred Polish soldiers were drawn up in a hollow square. It was announced that the oath would be given; whoever did not wish to

take it would be sent to an internment camp. The oath 165
was read:

"I swear to serve my Polish Fatherland, to preserve brotherhood in arms with the German and Austro-Hungarian armies, to obey the Emperor of Germany as the Commander-in-chief in the present war, and the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, as likewise all other military superiors."

"You have heard," said the senior battalion commander. "Who wants to take the oath, let him step forward."

No one moved. The ominous stillness was broken by a murmur that grew to a cry, "We will not! We will not!"

"Who does not wish to take this oath, let him take fifteen steps backward."

As if these words were a command at a review, all the officers and all the men took the fifteen steps. In utter silence the officers threw their swords at the feet of the two from Warsaw. The soldiers looked on, their eyes burning.

Only one brigade of the Legions took the oath. Given a new name, which meant the Polish Auxiliary Corps, they were sent to the Austrian east front. Of the thousands who refused, those who were Russian subjects were sent to internment camps; those who were Austrian subjects went to the Italian front. The Legions were disbanded. In their last act they fulfilled the role Pilsudski assigned them as much as in their deeds on the battlefield.

They found life difficult in the internment camps. But they trusted the Commander's political strategy just as they trusted his military strategy. They consoled themselves by saying, "He knows what he wants."

Pilsudski heard the story of the disarming of his Legions. He realized that such a demonstration would intensify the Germans' feeling against him. His friends suggested his going to Russia and began making plans

166 for the journey and for his stay there. But he would not desert his old comrades.

He wrote two letters: to the Legions, saying how proud he was that in this last crisis Polish soldiers had taken the only position that could uphold the Polish national honor. To Von Bessler at the Zamek, asking the honor of sharing the captivity of the Legions.

He never received a reply to this second letter.

The Legions were disbanded. There remained the P.O.W., nearly thirty thousand strong, which could now work without him.

In comparison with other armies in the World War, the Legions were a small group. Their importance for Poland lies in the fact that they were ready for 1920.

XI.

MADGEBURG.

1917 was an eventful year. In March the fall of the czar. In April the new government in Russia recognized the independence of Poland; the third and last of the Partitioners had canceled the Partitions. In April also the United States entered the war. These two events changed the entire situation—for Poland, for the Allies, for the Central Powers. The end of the long war might be still far off, but it was approaching.

Pilsudski's refusal to take the oath of loyalty to Germany was an instance of his great political clear-sightedness. What was it he had said in Paris in February of 1914? When Russia shall have been defeated by Germany, and Germany by France. To him the outcome of the war was perfectly clear, but to the average man it was by no means certain. Suppose the Russian offensive succeeded? Suppose the Germans won and took all of Russian Poland for Germany, giving the people a measure of autonomy under a German king? To many eyes they were apparently at the height of their power. There were many chances that Pilsudski's move might have proved to be all wrong.

He was sure of his ground. He refused to lend his authority to Ludendorff's recruiting plans. It was of the greatest importance, he reasoned, to have a Polish army—not an Austrian army, not a German army, but a Polish army with Polish commanders, and it must be as large as

168 possible, a guarantee of the Polish cause at the time of making peace.

This refusal had three consequences: for the Legions disbanding and weary months in internment camps; for the Germans a weakened force on the western front, instead of the half million or more fresh soldiers they'd counted on; for Pilsudski himself arrest and imprisonment.

He weighed various plans. He might seek a refuge in Austrian Poland. He might start a rebellion against Germany—that meant the risk of a terrible repression. He might go to Russia—that meant running away, deserting. Besides, he was convinced *emigrés* could do nothing decisive for Poland.

Friends warned him that the Germans would not allow him to stay in Warsaw; his influence was too great, his presence too exciting. He might go into hiding—he, an old conspirator. Lastly, he might stay and deliberately let himself be arrested, the victim of Germany; then no one could say he was a tool of the Germans; his standing with the common people would be the greater.

After the Legions refused to take the required oath, many P.O.W. leaders were arrested. Speculation was rife as to what steps the Germans would take with Pilsudski. Sosnkowski (Sos-en-kof'-skee), who had been his chief of staff in the First Brigade, and for many years before that his faithful collaborator, said to his friends, "They won't arrest me—they'll take the Chief!" But he was wrong.

Pilsudski sent his letter to Von Bessler, but before it reached him two German officers went to the house where he was staying, very late in the evening, with an order for his arrest. He was charged with criminal conspiracy against the security of the country. He was taken in a motor out to the Citadel. The most frightful months of his life had been spent there. Now in that famous Pavilion X he was treated with politeness. But he could not

sleep. He walked up and down, thinking of all the prisons he had known in Russia, thinking of Siberia—and now a new kind of prison—a German one. Must it be his fate always to go to prison for Poland's independence?

Early the next morning—July twenty-third—he was taken to the railroad station where he waited in a special room reserved for dignitaries, with four tall gendarmes and a Prussian captain. His old friend Sosnkowski, arrested also the night before, was brought in. They were put into a second-class compartment, each seated between two gendarmes. Changing trains at Poznan late in the afternoon, they traveled north to Dantzig.

It was one o'clock in the night when they arrived. They went on foot through the sleeping town, not to the barracks, but to a prison. Their luggage was searched, their money and watches taken away, and they were led off to their cells. One small grated window, high up; a bunk made of tin, with a straw mattress reeking of disinfectant; an iron table fastened to the wall; one stool; a frightful smell. They were allowed to get food from outside. They could have half an hour's exercise each day in a small courtyard, accompanied by an armed guard.

Six days later they were told to get ready for a journey. Their walk to the station made a great sensation, for their escort was an N.C.O. and two gendarmes with loaded rifles and bayonets fixed. The crowds were first curious, then aggressive and threatening. But they were not molested.

They were put on the train for Berlin, where they arrived the next morning at sunrise. An hour's walk through the center of the city to another station, and then a third-class compartment for the short ride to the fortress of Spandau. There the two friends were separated. Pilsudski looked worn out, Sosnkowski thought; his face was tired and pale.

The cell was larger than in Dantzig, but no walks were allowed, no outside food. Breakfast was a brown liquid

170 called by courtesy coffee, with black bread. Dinner was a concoction made of flour boiled in salted water till it was a glue-like mass, with two small dried pears. Supper was breakfast over again. At night Pilsudski could not sleep, but till dawn fought a hopeless fight with thousands of swarming vermin.

A week of this, and then he was taken to Wesel, a little town on the Rhine, not far from the Dutch frontier. Here he stayed in a citadel built by Napoleon. It was surrounded by a trench and high walls, with turrets and bastions. In September he was transferred to Magdeburg, not far from Berlin. There he remained a year and two months—his third period of inactivity.

The old Magdeburg fortress was built on an island in the river Elbe—a real fortress at one time, surrounded by high walls, three feet thick. Within the enclosure were several buildings. In one corner of the inner courtyard was a square made on two sides by walls, on the other two by high fences of close wooden palings. In the middle of this square was a small two-story building whose long German name meant “summer quarters for officers who are under arrest.”

Pilsudski was assigned three cells upstairs—a bedroom, a diningroom, the third perhaps a reception room—that made him laugh, as he had no callers. The N.C.O.s in charge of him lived downstairs. There was a fair-sized garden where he was allowed to walk—at first three hours a day, but later the doors were left open till dusk and he could go and come as he chose; but he was never alone in the garden. An armed soldier was always on guard there, two of them by the fences, a fourth by the gate. Here he lived for a whole year—quite alone.

His food was brought from a nearby restaurant. It was fairly good, enough in quantity, but of course many war substitutes. He was allowed to smoke. He had, to his great astonishment, all the privileges of a general and was treated with the respect due to that rank. The Aus-

trians did not give him a general's commission, it remained for the Germans, from whom he had cut off a great Polish army, to raise him to that high grade.

He said, some years afterward, that he had little to complain of at Magdeburg. It was cold, but the Germans did try to heat the building. He was not well and suffered from his bad heart and in the winter from rheumatism. The doctor ordered baths and a special treatment in the town, and for this purpose he was allowed to leave the fortress under guard.

The days passed slowly, quietly, in great loneliness. It was enforced inactivity. He had no books or papers, though later he was allowed to subscribe to the Magdeburg daily paper, where he read of German victories. He knew nothing of what was going on in Warsaw, nothing of the record the P.O.W. was making, nothing of a new gesture toward a Polish government made by the Germans in September, which they called the Council of Regency. He knew nothing of events on the western front, nor of Kerensky's offensive and its defeat by the Austrians.

With his characteristic philosophy he writes:

"I put up with solitude very easily and do not feel its whole burden as others do. By brain work I can dull the longing which is the weariest side of prison life. For people so scrupulously isolated as I was in Magdeburg, life becomes an almost unbearable burden. This was the harder for me because I had been torn from a life so full of variety and daily changing experience. I had lived the life of war in which human nerves grow accustomed to perpetual movement, to a daily and inevitable change of occupation, a daily and inevitable transformation of oneself into a perpetually renewed implement of struggle, working by an ever varying effort of will, nerves, mind or heart.

"The quiet of prison then, and the unaccustomed—because German—monotony of the days, offered a perfect field to consuming desire for the colored stream of war life, so full of movement. Complete isolation did not even permit me to know what had happened or was happening to my colleagues and friends with whom I had been united in bonds of brotherhood by the labors of the war, which we had experienced together in my first brigade of the Legion. They had been wearisome and hard indeed, but extraordinarily delightful when borne so fraternally. Often, too, in my long lonely

strolls through the garden, flowers of memory grew up in me from my recent experience which seemed almost alive. They pressed upon me and mocked me like mirages in the desert; I saw the dear faces of friends, I almost heard their laughter beside the thunder of the guns and the rattle of rifles playing their war music."

For the whole ten years when he had been earnestly studying military history and military strategy, and during the war itself, he had been intensely interested in the psychology of commanding. He began analyzing his conduct as leader, criticising himself and his subordinates. For a long time this was in thought only, till he began to feel that he was starting an unreal life, a purely mental labor, and that his body would cease to function normally. He gave up smoking for a fortnight as a trial exercise of his will, and then decided that the simplest way to get rid of the burden of longing would be to try putting his memories on paper. The mechanical work of writing would link him more closely to life.

To triumph over his homesickness for Poland, he would describe certain outstanding incidents of the war, analyzing his conduct as chief and illustrating in himself, sincerely and quietly, the truth about the spirit of the commander who is always

"weighed down by the burden of dangers, uncertainties and contradictions. Every soldier struggles with them because they are the essence of war. A commander bears, in addition, the weight of responsibility for his subordinates and must feel on his cheek the stinging shame of humiliation when his work of commanding has failed and others have paid with their blood for his lack of success."

From the wealth of his experiences he chose three adventures of the First Brigade, when he risked almost the whole detachment, when he was forced to work the hardest. As he wrote, he unconsciously poured out his longing for everything that made up Poland—the muddy road, the dilapidated village, the people, the landscape, his colleagues. The result was *Moje Pierwsze Boje* (My First Battles).

Of course there had to be some explanation of this sudden writing activity. He was afraid they would take his papers away, so he told the guards that he wanted to write a formal complaint about his arrest and also about his solitary confinement. He had learned from a German general, commander at the Wesel prison, that complete isolation of prisoners was contrary to the Prussian law, except in two cases, neither of which applied here. In a way, his solitary confinement might be taken as a compliment, suggesting how great his influence was throughout Poland, how powerful he was against German plans.

He asked for a large stock of paper, saying he would probably have to do a number of drafts in Polish before he transferred his complaints to a language he knew imperfectly. Thus he obtained plenty of writing material and had an excuse for sitting a long time at his table, pen in hand. He had to think about economizing paper, and when six or seven years later he was getting his manuscript ready for the publisher, he noticed how the need for saving paper had made him economize words too. His writing was always extremely legible, even in a letter where he mentions that he is writing late at night, or when very tired. But these war memoirs were written in very small characters, hard to read. The style too is cramped—he skimped on words.

Those months in Magdeburg were a period of reflection and introspection. He thought a great deal. He suffered a great deal. It was not only papers he thought they might take.

“While I was a prisoner in Magdeburg, the hangman stood always behind me. I was never sure of my life. I was shut in as in the grave, completely cut off from the whole world. I often thought of dear things, as of a kiss with which a man goes to his grave.”

And in another connection he said, “Often there in Magdeburg I thought of Wilno and longed for Wilno. A dear town.”

Shut up within those thick prison walls, his shadow must have escaped his pitiless captors. Just his shadow was enough to create an unbreakable resistance to all the German schemes, to every temptation to fall in with their plans. His friends in Poland discussed taking steps to free him, as once they had plotted to secure his transfer from another Citadel and his escape from the asylum in St. Petersburg. But their plans did not work out.

The spring came and passed in a monotony of long days, always the same. The crisis of the war was at hand. The Central Powers were weakening under the repeated shocks at the front and the exhaustion caused by the blockade. The Allies were preparing their great counter-offensive. The long struggle was nearing its end.

In August Sosnkowski was suddenly transferred from the prison in the town of Magdeburg to the fortress and was assigned a cell near the Chief's. His first anxious thought was that Pilsudski did not look well. How much they had to talk over—comparing notes, they found they had been in the same prisons since they had last seen each other at Spandau. Writing was pushed aside and they talked and talked and talked.

The day's schedule now was: breakfast, reading the newspapers—especially the war news, brief official announcements where they had to read between the lines; they put maps up on the walls and marked the movements of the armies. Then into the little garden where they walked and talked, Pilsudski often speaking of the near future, thinking aloud about plans for the development of the Polish state. After dinner they separated for work, the one writing, the other doing some mechanical drawing. Then they talked and played countless games of chess, keeping a record of the winners on the white tile stove. Pilsudski was extremely fond of chess, which he called "our noble amusement."

In September and October the Germans changed their policy and were more affable. The two prisoners were

allowed to leave the Citadel for excursions, with an officer and one N.C.O. walking a few steps behind them. They visited the cathedral, a museum, the parks—all the sights of Magdeburg. They were, they laughingly commented, prisoners plus tourists.

They had been reading for months only news of victory for German arms. Gradually there came, even behind the thick walls of the Magdeburg citadel, a feeling of uncertainty and nervousness which grew daily stronger. What was happening in Poland?

At the end of September a caller came to see Pilsudski—one occasion to make use of his reception room. It was a purely social call from Count Harry Kessler, who had met him two years before at the front. He was now in the office of the Chancellor in Berlin. He brought with him some delicacies—fruit, sweets, wine and pies. Pilsudski gave them to his N.C.O.—to the man's great delight. Was this change of front due to Germany's military reverses?

Events began to crowd fast in that autumn of 1918. The Central Powers were preparing the second battle of the Marne. The P.O.W. were still resisting Germany in Poland. Austrian regiments were deserting. In October defeat on the battlefield for Germany. Shut off from all the world as they were, toward the end of that month the two prisoners knew that the catastrophe of the Central Powers was at hand. The announcements of the General Staff in the Magdeburg paper became each day briefer—dramatically briefer. Despair could be almost felt. Some change in their fate was now expected by the two Poles. In their thoughts they were already back in Warsaw. Pilsudski, never a talkative person, became more silent, as if he felt already the burden of the great tasks that were to come on his shoulders.

One morning an excited N.C.O. rushed up to him, astonished, with a copy of the German magazine, *Die Woche*, which had a picture of him with the caption,

176 "General Pilsudski, the new Commander-in-chief of the Polish army." It was true, as he learned later, the Council of Regency had named him for this post in a Polish cabinet.

A fortnight later, about eleven in the morning, as they were finishing their walk in the garden, they heard the bell ring at the entrance gate and after some parley two civilians entered. One wore a rusty old hat, a red muffler, an old, stained overcoat and high military boots; it was Count Kessler.

"Gentlemen, you are free," he began without any formal greeting. "I am ordered by the Chancellor to accompany you to Berlin. You leave for Warsaw at six o'clock. Hurry up—there's not a moment to lose." He spoke disconnectedly. "Magdeburg is in revolt. A car is waiting for you. Please take only the most necessary things. I repeat once more, there's not a moment to be lost. Otherwise I don't guarantee anything."

The Poles listened to his nervous speech coolly and quietly. It was not the time to ask for explanations. Without a word they went to their rooms. A train to Warsaw late that afternoon. Before they could pack their things, Kessler persistently asked them to hurry. He apologized, but wouldn't hear of luggage; it might attract the attention of the crowds demonstrating in the streets.

Sosnkowski threw some linen and his toilet articles into an attaché case. Pilsudski took his in a paper package. They were sorry to have to leave their maps, the manuscript, their other papers, but Kessler was now impatient. Months later part of these articles were returned by the German government; the balance was stolen by the mob that broke into the fortress half an hour after they had left it.

Soldiers were gathering in the courtyard. They passed through, almost running. There was something electric in the atmosphere, like the unusual quiet just before a storm. The guards at the entrance stared at the four men,

but said nothing. As if they were a group out for a walk, they passed the bridge over the Elbe and went through side streets to the waiting car. Soon they were outside the town. 177

It was a lovely autumn day, very sunny. How blissful it was to be out in the open! The two Germans talked in a friendly way, but the Poles were silent, exhilarated by the fresh air, and bewildered by the sudden change. The tires of their car were made of potato flour, a war substitute for rubber, and melted from the friction, smelling like burned pudding. Every few kilometers they had to stop to change tires.

In the villages they passed through Pilsudski noticed no signs of any revolution. Men and women were at work in the fields as usual. At a little dairy restaurant they had "second breakfast," which had been ordered by telephone. On across the level, sandy, monotonous plains of Brandenburg, broken here and there by pine woods; on the horizon, about four o'clock, the smoke of Berlin.

At one railroad crossing they saw a great crowd, civilians with a few soldiers. They waited there while a train passed, packed with sailors going from Kiel to Berlin, all shouting and waving their caps. It was the German revolution.

Once at Berlin, they learned that the train service to Warsaw had broken down. They were taken to the Hotel Continental, where the Foreign Office had reserved an apartment for them. Obeying an order from Von Besse-ler in Warsaw, a German colonel came. He wanted to bargain with the released prisoners, using Pilsudski for political purposes. The calm answer came: "I would not have left Magdeburg, but for the fact that we were told we were free. I can not accept any conditions now." He would not give his word to do nothing against Germany. He would promise nothing.

They spent the night at the hotel, enjoying the luxury of down pillows and satin comforts. The next morning

178 they wanted to go for a walk, interested to see what conditions were in the capital of Germany. Pilsudski, in his gray Legion uniform, did not wish to go out without a sword; Kessler was asked to secure one for him and did so. About noon they set out. They noticed nothing unusual in the center of the city. Shops were open, there seemed to be the usual traffic, they met no officers.

Kessler and a man from the Polish section of the Foreign Office were their hosts at luncheon at Hiller's restaurant in *Unter den Linden*. They had a private room, flowers, nice table service, with several waiters. The food was delicious, just as in the days before 1914; but the atmosphere was full of embarrassment. There were long pauses in the talk. Pilsudski was impatient, yet could not but see how amusing the situation was. The two Germans still wanted to bargain with him as to his future actions.

Twice the Foreign Office man was summoned to the telephone. Each time he returned, looking more anxious. The revolution, he reported, had broken out in Berlin in earnest. The Chancellor ordered him to conduct their guests to the railroad station immediately. A special train would be ready in half an hour. The attempts at bargaining were suddenly ended.

They started from the restaurant, leaving the last course and the wine untouched. They had been there an hour and a half. The scene on the streets was completely changed, as if by magic. The air was full of roaring and shouting. Military trucks with red flags were driving about, filled with soldiers and sailors, with workmen and crowds of demonstrators, even a few civilians with rifles. With some difficulty they pushed their way through the crowds on *Unter den Linden* to a side street and so reached the hotel.

Their special train was an engine and one first-class car. Two men from the Foreign Office traveled with them. They were plainly anxious at every large station, but

everything was in order. At Torun, the first large Polish city, P.O.W. men were in charge and inspected the train. From there on to Warsaw conditions were reversed and the two Germans were under the protection of the Poles. They arrived on the morning of November tenth.

In 1914 Pilsudski entered the war, fighting on the side of Austria. In 1918 when it ended, he was a prisoner of the Germans. With the Central Powers, then against them. Apparently the most inconsistent man in the world. But in that inconsistency there was staunch consistency, for he was fighting for Poland—first, last, all the time. Without hesitation, he had changed when circumstances changed. A romantic in his aims, he was yet a realist, an opportunist in his methods to accomplish them.

Years later when Pilsudski had a visit from the premier of Hungary, he asked, speaking in German, "In what language shall we talk? French? or English? or German?"

"Why, Marshal," said Mr. Goemboes, "you speak excellent German."

Pilsudski replied dryly, "But with a strong Magdeburg accent."

XII.

CHIEF OF STATE.

Pilsudski had gone to Magdeburg not as commander of the First Brigade of the Legions, for he had sent in his resignation to the Austrian authorities a year before; not as chief of the Military Section under the Council of State—that post too he had resigned. He had been arrested as a private citizen whose influence was so strong, so all pervading that it set at naught every effort to recruit a Polish army for the Central Powers. He had been away nearly sixteen months; long enough to lose touch with people and events in Poland, if ordinary communication had continued; but he had been completely cut off from the outside world.

A month before the Armistice several political parties in Poland began agitating, each wanting to organize the future state, each thinking of itself rather than of the country as a whole.

On the sixth of November, at Lublin which had been the center of the Austrian Occupation, a Socialist group had proclaimed the republic of Poland and set up the first independent government. Warsaw hesitated, uncertain whether to join with Lublin or not. Through the whole country there was an indescribable emotion and excitement which might, at any moment, break out in civil war.

On the evening of November ninth the German governor disappeared from the *Zamek*, going in disguise on

a little river steamer to Torun and so slipping across into Germany. 181

On Sunday morning, the tenth, a special train arrived at the main station in Warsaw. It was very early—shortly after six o'clock. Only a few people were there—some newspaper men, the head of the P.O.W. in the city, and Prince Lubomirski, one of the three members of the Council of Regency which the Germans had appointed to succeed the Council of State. A man stepped from the train, dressed in the gray uniform of the Legions—rather a shabby uniform, worn and stained in the prison of Magdeburg.

All over Poland people had been discussing Pilsudski's return and expecting it, any time after the first of November. He was now the acknowledged head of the nation. He was both a legend and a hope.

Prince Lubomirski invited him to breakfast—a social occasion, for the political situation was not discussed. The breakfast party was rather a gesture, a welcome back from the head of what little government existed in Poland, a recognition of his importance. But he could not loiter; by eight o'clock he was at work.

In a quiet side street near the center of the city the P.O.W. had rented three rooms in a boardinghouse. The coming and going of their members passed unnoticed and it was comparatively easy to escape from German spies there. In a short time it was noised abroad that Pilsudski was in that house. At once the quiet street was full of people, shouting his name enthusiastically, expressing their belief that his return meant better times. By ten o'clock a motor could not enter the street.

Delegations went to speak with him, from two to five men in a group. Giving perhaps half an hour to each, he began seeing them early that day and continued till four o'clock the next morning; then he rested for two hours and received more delegations until the late afternoon. They talked and he listened, for he had to learn

the present situation in Poland and orientate himself. He was a good listener and occasionally would ask a searching question. Then he would say, "I thank you. I will think over what you have said," and turn to the next.

Nineteen political parties sent their representatives—four groups of Conservatives, seven Socialist and Peasant parties, one that was strongly pro-German, and seven with odds and ends of opinions. He was the center through whom all the currents of the community passed.

There came also individuals asking his advice—the director of the city's electric light plant, anxious about his taking over from the Germans; the Commandant of Warsaw, to report on his keeping order, with this sudden change of power. At eleven in the evening came three German soldiers, speaking a mixture of Polish and German. Pilsudski's friends didn't want him to see them, but he answered, "Let them come in," and refused to have any anxious Poles in the room.

Regardless of what their officers wanted, the German soldiers in Warsaw had formed Soldiers' Councils—communistic or socialistic. They sent this delegation to arrange for the evacuation of the thirty thousand German troops then in the city and also for those in the Ukraine. If he would not promise what they demanded, they had a threat ready—their army in the east would march on Warsaw, take the city, fire down on it from the Citadel, and hold it until the last of their men were safely gone.

After their talk with Pilsudski, they went back to their barracks to report and in three hours returned with a letter.

"How shall we address it?" they consulted some of the Poles. "To General Pilsudski?"

"But he is not a general."

"President, then?"

"But he is not president."

"Why not," some one suggested, "write *Herr Pilsudski*?"

‘No, no. That wouldn’t do at all. He must have a title.” 183

“We have it,” they cried, after fifteen minutes of discussion of this delicate point, “*To the Leader of the Polish people!*”

That Sunday evening the Council of Regents turned over to Pilsudski the command of the small armed force at their disposal. He wasted no time over the puzzling question, Was the Council a legal body?, but accepted this post from their hands. The next day, which is celebrated in Poland not only as Armistice Day but also as the beginning of the reborn state, he formally took command of the troops. Three days later the Regents resigned all their duties and all their powers in his favor, naming him Chief of State (Naczelnik), the title Kosciuszko had borne in 1794.

Who can tell what might have occurred, had Pilsudski not taken the power into his own hands? There was no one else with such authority in the whole country. Poland was not yet a state—she had no frontiers, no government, no treasury, no army; and there were thousands of enemy soldiers on her soil. Chaos reigned. This had been the battleground of eastern Europe, crossed and recrossed by hostile armies, with a front that in some places had shifted back and forth no less than seven times. Eighty-five percent of the country had been fought over. That meant destruction of houses, bridges and railroads, schools and factories, public buildings. The fields of the peasants had been laid waste, their livestock slaughtered or requisitioned, their cottages burned. Thousands and thousands of people were unemployed, there was lack of essentials for the restoring of industry. Machinery and vast stocks of raw material, such as cotton and copper, had been taken away by the Germans. There was hunger and great shortage of food, due to an insufficient harvest and untilled fields; and this for more than one year, as the Russians retreating had burned the

184 standing grain. There was a great deal of sickness and a typhus epidemic that was to assume huge proportions shortly. There were six codes of law, often contradictory. There were four currencies in circulation, their value low and uncertain. Public and private finances were in distress.

The desolation was frightful. Villages and towns were in ruins. Railroads ran only where they served the needs of armies. Everything had to be created, beginning at the very bottom.

Politically the situation was as terrible. The people, separated into three parts for more than a century, were separated mentally; they were divided into so many parties that there was no coherence. Austrian Poland had to be united with Russian Poland; by the end of December German Poland also. The different branches of administration had to be improvised. Radical propaganda of every sort was rife. The Communists were active, agitating among the unemployed, hoping to create a revolution as in Russia. The country was in a state of ferment. Everything was uncertain and anything might happen.

The end of the war and the collapse of three great empires—nations once strong enough to partition Poland—had spread chaos over eastern Europe. On the east and on the west of the reborn state were storms; Germany, defeated, was in process of revolution; the Bolsheviks were in the saddle in Russia. The Ukrainians had declared themselves a republic and held Lwow, where fighting was going on. Lithuania, with Germany's encouragement, had taken an anti-Polish direction. The Regency Council had surrendered a task of uncertainties and difficulties. The new Chief of State saw little to aid him in his one great problem, the salvation of the country.

It was a threatening situation, but it was saved by Pilsudski who was indeed the "man of the hour." Instinctively the whole nation looked to him to deal with

the difficulties of the present, to plan for the future, to be ready for the unexpected. It was saved by his wise statesmanship, his gift for reconciling men who could not agree, his complete forgetfulness of himself in his work for Poland. 18

On the surface it looked as if his career were over. Since he was ten years old, he had had but one dream—the independence of Poland. Now she was free. But was the goal really attained? At the moment Poland seemed an idea rather than a fact. He had now a new task—to lead this free nation back to the high place it had had centuries before, to make her once more a Great Power in Europe. Another dream? The first had come true. He would make the second a reality also.

He had no time to celebrate a triumph, to rejoice that his goal was reached. He saw how necessary it was to create rapidly the structure of a state, with its own army, constitution, and all the usual attributes of a modern government. Poland must not be lacking when the war should be finally liquidated by the Allies.

First of all, a strong and efficient army. He had some remnants of the Legions, men he had himself trained, men he had tested over and over, men he could trust. He had also the second section of the First Brigade, the secret P.O.W. which now flourished in Russian Poland and Austrian Poland and German Poland, on the Italian front and in Siberia. By letter and telegram and in person these men reported for duty at the Belvedere, the palace in Warsaw where Pilsudski lived as Chief of State.

“Commander, I am here, at your service. What do you want me to do?”

He had been so long at Magdeburg that there were great gaps in his knowledge of Polish affairs. He listened to all the delegations those two days and made his plans, attacking the most pressing problem first. It was necessary to restore some sort of order. He mobilized

186 the P.O.W. and sent them to Dantzig, to Upper Silesia, to Torun and Lwow, to the western frontier.

The German troops acknowledged Pilsudski's authority and in a few days all the details of their evacuation were arranged and they had begun to leave Warsaw. They gave up their arms to the P.O.W. at the old frontier between Russia and Germany. It was also agreed that the four hundred thousand German troops in the south-east of Poland should go home by train roundabout, without crossing Poland at all. What might have been a very dangerous situation was avoided by Pilsudski's safe-conduct.

Next he took up the task of creating the essential of order and security—an army. Legionaries, P.O.W. men, soldiers from the old Austrian army, from the old German army, from the old Russian army—all had to be equipped, and the necessities of equipment were lacking. They had to be fused into one, which required time. And meanwhile Lwow, in the hands of the invading Ukrainians, pleaded for help. Boys and girls were fighting, the famous "Children of Lwow."

Many Poles were incensed that Pilsudski was apparently deaf to that city's requests. He knew he was taking a risk—a great risk. Lwow was important for itself and for its control of the rich oil fields nearby. He took a chance, feeling sure that somehow its patriotism and endurance would enable it to hold out through the efforts of its own citizens. The truth was he had no men to send, for his troops were in rags with torn shoes and he could not better their equipment. As soon as he possibly could he did dispatch soldiers to Lwow, half the force available. But when another indignant deputation informed him how necessary it was to save Lwow and that he was doing nothing at all, he listened and was silent, for secrecy was necessary for the success of the small expedition he had just sent off.

On the sixteenth of November Pilsudski sent a message to all the governments of Europe and America, announcing the formation of an independent Polish republic, and asking that her boundaries and sovereignty be respected. This was of great importance since it prevented an army of occupation which might have been made up of English or French or Italian troops, or all of them together; an army of occupation might have had disastrous consequences for the economic development of the country and for her frontiers.

Two days later Trotski submitted to the Soviet Council of War plans for an offensive on all the western fronts, to carry the Bolshevik revolution into the countries of Europe. They would begin with Poland—with her first because of the geographical situation; and as soon as possible; it was not necessary to wait till she organized her life as a state. Fortunately for Europe, the White armies occupied Trotski's attention for the moment and his plans had to wait.

But Pilsudski's brief announcement to the world did not end the difficulties. East and west, south and north-east, the frontiers of Poland were not fixed. Only one item was settled—the thirteenth of Wilson's fourteen points, that Poland should have access to the sea; even this was not definitely worded and left a loophole for future discussions and worries. Czecho-Slovakia claimed some territory that Poland also claimed. Two other countries besides Poland were claiming Upper Silesia, one of the richest districts in Europe.

Herein lay another difficulty. This vexing question of frontiers could not be decided at Warsaw, but at Paris. At home Pilsudski might claim to speak for Poland, but his authority was not equally recognized abroad. For months Dmowski and his National Committee had been meeting in Paris; all through the war they had been strongly pro-Ally, they controlled the Haller army that had been formed in France, a certain measure of recog-

188 nition had been granted them, and now they claimed to speak for Poland. Associated with them was the great patriot and great musician, Paderewski.

As to Pilsudski, the leaders among the Allies at Paris knew very little about him and that little seemed to them a danger to the peace of Europe, a danger to Poland also. They had vaguely heard that he was a Socialist—and that meant very close to a Bolshevist. He had begun the war on the side of Austria; they overestimated his war services to the Central Powers and underestimated his opposition to Germany. There were many intrigues at Paris. Some of the Poles there questioned his position, some suspected him, some fiercely hated him and any plan he might advance. Once more the weakness of Poland showed in bitter disagreements, and this at a time when unity was necessary.

After the creation of an army, Pilsudski classed as the next problem putting the Polish house in order. There must be peace instead of chaos. The peace of law was absolutely necessary and individual acts could not be allowed—whether of one person or one party. Every man was saying, "I speak for Poland." Every group was saying, "We represent Poland." If this feeling were permitted to spread through the nation, there would come internal conflicts and then the domination of one party.

"The chaos, inside and outside, for those first weeks awed me," he said afterwards.

He took prompt steps to suppress the government at Lublin. On his own authority he put in motion the entire machinery of the state. Poland must begin to make laws. This was not only the first step, but it was a step that must be taken quickly. On the seventeenth of November he announced a Cabinet—a Socialist Cabinet, with some members from the Peasant parties, with members from Austrian Poland and Russian Poland and German Poland. He asked the Cabinet to draw up the election law;

then the people could vote for members of Parliament who would make a constitution for the reborn state. He was anxious to push this through, to get a committee at work on the details of the constitution, in order to put an end to all the uncertainties and establish stable conditions. In his daily conference with the premier he always urged him to hurry with the election law. 189

For years Pilsudski had directed the activities of the P.P.S. The Socialists counted on his being one of them, particularly as all over Europe their doctrines were coming to the fore. But Pilsudski was not ready to carry out every wish of that party.

"Poland is technically ruined," he said to a group of its leaders. "For a while she must go on her hands and knees. This is not the time for experiments. Those must wait, till we have built a strong foundation and have plenty of money in our treasury."

And to a Socialist delegation that greeted him as "Comrade Pilsudski," he replied, "Gentlemen, I am no longer your comrade. In the beginning we followed the same direction and together took a tramway painted 'red.' But I left it at the station marked 'Poland's Independence' while you are continuing the journey as far as the station 'Socialism.' My good wishes accompany you, but be so good as to call me 'sir.'"

The premier announced in a speech that he was for freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of workmen to strike, freedom of this and that. Encouraged by this, the Socialists announced a great meeting in a square in the center of the city, from which they would march to the *Zamek*. What would they do then? Naturally the authorities were anxious. Revolution held the upper hand in Moscow, Berlin, Budapest; its atmosphere was over all of Europe. They dispatched to the courtyard of the *Zamek* two motor trucks with machine guns, to be prepared for trouble. Then some one telephoned to Pilsudski.

"No, no," was his prompt answer. "Send away your guns. I will be there. I will speak with them."

From a window he spoke quietly to the great crowd of demonstrators and asked them to send a committee in to see him. There was no trouble at all.

A delegation of Poles went to him in great excitement. The Germans had just left Warsaw and a red flag had appeared on the tower of the *Zamek*.

"How is this?" they demanded. "Are we a Socialist republic? or a Bolshevik republic? Why this red flag on the *Zamek*? Take it down!"

"I am not here to raise and take down flags. I have other things to do."

"But," they argued, "why don't you order it taken down?"

"Because, gentlemen, I did not put it up."

"But—is it there officially?"

His answer to that was, "What kind of flag did you see here as you came in?"

"The white and red flag of Poland."

"And you have the courage to come to me and ask if a red flag in the capital of Poland is official?"

"Well, Commander, what shall we do then?"

Pilsudski looked at them.

"Who," he asked slowly after a long silence, "put the red flag on the tower of the *Zamek*?"

"Some rascal!" a voice spoke up at the back of the group.

"If one rascal had the courage required to put it up, another rascal can take it down. Good morning, gentlemen."

That was extremely typical of Pilsudski. He forced men, even in those early days of the reborn state, and still more as time went on, to think and to act for themselves. Sometimes he did this with words, again with a pat on the shoulder, sometimes with a blow on the head. For so long Poles had had liberty of thought, but not

of responsible action—one of the worst evils of the Partitions. There are those among his countrymen who say that Pilsudski's greatest achievement for Poland was his forcing men to take responsibility, to think for themselves and then to act, accepting the consequences.

The mayor of Warsaw was presented with a list of forty demands from the city employees, to be granted at once or they would strike. The first asked for a hundred percent increase in wages because butter was double price; the others were about as unreasonable. The city had no money for such wages. The mayor consulted one of the Cabinet members who advised a compromise.

"A compromise," said the mayor, "will end with an eighty percent increase. Warsaw can not afford it."

Then he went to see Pilsudski.

"I can't give you soldiers to use against the strikers. I haven't any soldiers. If I had, how do you know they won't side with the strikers? That would be the end of the government."

"Then do advise me what to do."

"Organize the citizens against the strikers and the Communists."

That was done and soon the mayor had thousands of men and women enrolled in the Association of Self-Help. For six weeks they did the work of the city. Then a committee of experts, figuring with indexes and rates of exchange, recommended what percentage the increase should be; the strikers accepted the mayor's offer and went back to work. The day was saved for Warsaw.

The first Polish Cabinet had a difficult situation to meet. People in the three parts of Poland, living so long separated, could not work together. They quarreled over every question. Some of them refused to pay taxes. Some argued against laws that did not yet exist. Intrigues and ambitions broke out at Warsaw. Headstrong people and cowards organized demonstrations, saying that Pilsudski was to blame for the sad state of affairs

192 in Poland. In the markets they whispered that it was his fault bread and salt cost so much. He was accused of this and that—of treason to Poland, of trafficking with the enemies of the land, of wanting to play a high role. He answered such accusations with a proud silence—and his work.

Thanks to his wisdom and tact, the misunderstandings between Pilsudski and the National Committee at Paris were smoothed out and in December Paderewski came to Poland. At his instigation the Poles in Poznan rose against the Germans who were still in possession of German Poland, and expelled them. Pilsudski welcomed this move and was especially pleased that the people had done it on their own initiative, for he had no troops to send them.

From Poznan Paderewski came to Warsaw. He arrived at one o'clock at night and was greeted by wildly enthusiastic throngs, many of whom had been waiting at the railroad station since nine in the morning. There was a long procession to escort him to the hotel. Every one knew what a great patriot he was, that he had been Poland's best advocate in America, that it was he who had enlisted the support of Colonel House and President Wilson, that it was he who was responsible for the "thirteenth point."

The Conservatives, always Pilsudski's bitter enemies, used any pretext to attack him. They charged that he was against the Allies, that he was pro-German, that he was a Bolshevik. They then sent a group of men to the Belvedere one night to arrest him, though they had no warrant. Their attempted *coup d'etat* failed to upset his government and showed up the weakness of the opposition. He forgave the conspirators generously—a master stroke of diplomacy—and began negotiations with Paderewski, not in surrender, but as the victor in that little contest.

The national finances were in a bad way. An attempt to float an internal loan had met with very little response. The Cabinet members all became discouraged and resigned. Pilsudski formed a new Cabinet, non-partisan, with Paderewski the premier, with some members from the Conservative party. He did not consider whether they were of the Right or the Left, but were they able men who could serve Poland? They must unite the torn nation into a whole and every person must help.

The elections for Parliament took place at the end of January. There was a highly democratic suffrage—no educational qualification, no property qualification, no exclusions on the ground of sex or race or religion. The women of Poland owe their unusual status as citizens to Pilsudski who immediately said "Yes," when a delegation went to him to ask for the privilege of voting and holding office.

The first Parliament met on February ninth—sooner than any of Poland's neighbors were ready to construct their states—Czecho-Slovakia or Finland, Lithuania or Latvia or Estonia. Pilsudski addressed the members, stressing the need for hard work in the enormous task before them all. Eleven days later he surrendered his power to Parliament, which voted unanimously that he should continue as Chief of State until a president could be chosen under the Constitution. They could not foresee that a war would delay this and that he would remain in office till the end of 1922.

The situation had changed since November. Pilsudski's authority and prestige were growing at home and at Paris, while the conservative party was growing weaker. The new Cabinet was recognized by the National Committee, thus avoiding a double Polish representation at the Peace Conference. Paderewski went to Paris to urge Poland's claims before the treaty makers. Pilsudski raised an army to defend them.

There was so much to be done. Poland must have an eight-hour law. There must be state insurance. There must be public health service. There must be some sort of land reform—however, that must be carried out slowly, to avoid too abrupt changes in agricultural affairs involving three-fourths of the population.

Other nations were not waiting. The Czechs invaded the territory claimed by them and the Poles, and there was a week of fighting before they agreed to an armistice and a boundary arranged by a committee of the Allies. There was fighting with the Germans in Upper Silesia. The Ukrainians, once Lwow was relieved, had to be pushed back in the southeast. In the north Lithuanians and Bolsheviks were on Polish soil. Five enemies at once—it was a repetition of Polish history of the seventeenth century when Swedes and Cossacks, Tartars and Russians swept across the land. Sienkiewicz's great historical novel of this period was well named *The Deluge*. This was a twentieth century deluge, on south and southeast, on west and north and east. Pilsudski had to build up an army while all this fighting was going on. The whole nation believed in his lucky star and was so accustomed to his victories that at first they were not greatly stirred by the threatened storm of enemies.

In April, 1919, the Polish army from France arrived in Warsaw. What a help it would have been if France had sent this Haller army sooner! They were experienced soldiers, certainly a splendid addition to his force. Still he had to recruit and recruit. Always too few. By the spring of 1920 he had six hundred thousand men, a marvelous work of organization. A large force, for the first time in Pilsudski's career.

If it takes time to make an army, it takes still more time to make officers. Before he went to Magdeburg, looking far ahead, he foresaw this need and sent one of his trusted colonels to visit military schools in Ger-

many and return, prepared to open such high schools for Polish officers. Every three months that colonel graduated a class of three hundred N.C.O's and two hundred officers, well trained and ready for actual work.

"Politically," Pilsudski once said to him, "it did not look nice (referring to his having had to take an oath to Germany), "but what you have done is very important for Poland—and for me."

"Commander," replied the colonel, "that is for me full absolution."

The Polish people were not used to cooperation. The army was the first to unite, welded into one from a chaotic mass by the will power of Pilsudski. For all the soldiers of Poland, no matter from what part of the country they came, there was one insignia—the zigzag which had distinguished the uniform of the army of Congress Kingdom a century before; it was taken over first for the Legions, then for the whole Polish army.

Meanwhile he left diplomacy to the Polish representatives at Paris. He read the daily reports of the discussions around the peace table and shrugged his shoulders. Poland's fate would not be decided on paper. Here on the spot *faits accomplis* must be created, to speak for themselves and be a basis for her claims to frontiers. The Allies, he saw clearly, would draw the western boundaries between Poland and Germany, Poland and Czecho-Slovakia. The eastern boundaries the Poles would make by their own strength and efforts.

With the arrival of the Haller army Pilsudski had sufficient men to start. In April, 1919, an advance began in the north and the Wilno district was occupied by the Poles. The Germans had been in possession of the city for more than three years, and then the Bolsheviks. Tears stood in Pilsudski's eyes when he spoke of it.

"My beloved Wilno," he said.

"But, Commander," his old soldiers hastened to reassure him, "we will take Wilno back."

"Yes, but how much she will have to suffer meanwhile!"

Thus he described it, some years later, at a reunion of the Legions:

"Shut up in the Belvedere, I dreamed of Wilno and thought of Wilno. Wilno must be mine! And the Legions answered.

"At that time when Poland had scarcely begun to live, when on all sides men were demanding our soil and reaching out their hands to take it, when battles were being waged on all our frontiers and the war still went on while other states were already living in peace, while cannon were still thundering by us and there quiet reigned, then no one thought of Wilno and no heart was troubled for Wilno.

"You have shown yourselves dependable soldiers who never failed me, who gave me everything that the soldier must give to the leader. I called to you. That Eastertide, battalion after battalion, squadron after squadron hastened to Wilno. And a murmur ran through your ranks, 'The Commander loves Wilno. We will give him Wilno as an Easter gift.'

'A magnificent present. Without considering the importance of it for us, when I think of it, how you wanted to give it to me as a gift, as a caress for the heart of the Commander, then I say that such an action meant *love*.'

When the Polish troops approached Wilno, the peasants brought food for the horses of the cavalry who made up the advance detachment. Pilsudski received a touching reception. People wept in the streets. They were hungry themselves, but they gave food to the soldiers. He told the citizens to decide whether they wanted to belong to Lithuania, to Poland, or to Soviet Russia. He suggested a temporary government, made up of Lithuanians, Poles and Jews; this the Lithuanians refused to consider. There were long discussions over the boundary lines, for it was necessary to consider language, ethnography, railroads, and a possible military need in the future.

Early in May began the advance in the southeast against the Ukrainians and the troops of Soviet Russia. The Polish army there numbered fifty thousand men, with two hundred guns. All through 1919 there was

fighting with the Ukrainians, which ended with Poland's remaining in possession of the territory in dispute. 197

Farther north, the inhabitants had begged Poland for aid when the Germans evacuated the district; but the Russians were able to occupy it before the Polish troops could come up. By July the Poles had reached the old frontier between Russia and Austria and were authorized by the Allies to establish a civil administration there. Before the treaty makers had fixed the frontiers in the west, Pilsudski had given them something to consider in the east.

In August he went up to Wilno. The mayor of a nearby village offered him bread and salt, the old ceremony of submission and homage. His picture was shown everywhere and was sold on the streets. In October he was again in Wilno for the reopening of the university, a very important event for Polish culture in that section of the land. He made a very eloquent address, referring to the years he had spent in that building, a schoolboy in the Russian *gimnazjum*, speaking slowly and occasionally glancing at his gray cap that lay on the table in front of him. The reporters thought the speech was read from notes and none of them took it down, but it was all *ex tempore* and so, unfortunately, was lost to posterity.

Pilsudski proposed a constructive plan for the east of Europe—to push the boundary of Russia back, saving that much from Bolshevism, and to form a federation of all the states that had broken away from Russia—Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and the Ukraine. Together, they could offer a stronger front against the Soviet Republic and the world revolution; only if they united could they resist another Partition. He was not an imperialist, greedy for Poland; he was a federalist and wanted home rule for all.

Paderewski was enthusiastic over this plan. The Allies would not accept it. Perhaps Russia would not

198 remain Bolshevist. The Whites might overthrow that government. Or some counter revolution might come. To a possible new Russia they might have to fulfill their obligations to the old. But the opponents of the plan had nothing to offer in its place.

Always on the east the peril of Bolshevism. Fighting there throughout the entire summer of 1919. Trotsky was just over the way and between the two nations there was no fixed boundary. Not free to give his whole attention to Poland, because of the Kolchak and Denikin expeditions, the Communist leader was considering possibilities. In the autumn he suggested an armistice. Pilsudski replied that the Poles would stop fighting to discuss peace, but not a truce; he did not trust their word, but felt they would use the time for further preparations and further propaganda. Between the two peoples, he said, there must be serious peace or serious war, Poland could not follow the zigzag policy of the Allies. Negotiations lasted through the winter, but it began to look more and more like war.

In March of 1920, exactly twenty years from the day he first entered the Warsaw Citadel as a prisoner, Pilsudski was named Marshal of Poland. He was presented with the silver baton of a marshal, at the foot of the Sigismund column where once Russian troops had fired on a religious procession of Poles, where often patriotic demonstrations had been held. There was a great reception afterwards at the *Zamek*. Every regiment sent a delegation to greet him.

The whole nation began referring to him as "the Marshal," without using his surname. But many of his old friends of the Legions and the P. O. W. asked special permission to continue calling him "the Commander."

XIII.

THE YEAR 1920.

Trotsky's plans, announced one week after the Armistice in 1918, seemed practical. After four years of the war, Poland was bleached white and appeared to be not resurrected, but dying. Where could she find resources to build up an army of defense, when her treasury was empty, her cities in ruins, her railroads greatly damaged, her factories standing idle, minus machinery and raw materials, her fields ravaged by battle and requisitions and pillage?

Trotsky had on his side one undeniable fact—circumstances were peculiarly favorable to revolution. Men's minds were weakened by the strain of the war years, so that they were ready to fall a prey to any doctrines, if only they were new and different. The old order of things had brought that great catastrophe of war on the world, now the situation might be bettered by a decided change. Bolshevism offered a gospel of hope.

During all of 1919 Trotsky had to deal with Wrangel, Denikin and Kolchak, leaders of counter-revolutionary attempts to restore the old regime in Russia. Once they were brushed aside, he could give his whole attention to Poland and then, joining hands with the Communists in Germany, to western Europe.

In December a distinguished French general who was acting as instructor in the officers' school in Warsaw, returned to Paris to report to his government that Soviet

200 forces were being concentrated in the west of Russia for an invasion of Poland. France did nothing. Pilsudski was disappointed, but saw clearly then that Poland must depend on herself. He began active preparations for a campaign against the Soviets. He would take the initiative and attack first.

The Ukrainian leader Petlura had been defeated by the Bolsheviks. He fled to Poland, asking for help, saw Pilsudski and made an alliance with him. They would march together into the Ukraine, to take that district from the Russians. Two days after their agreement was signed a Polish army, infantry and cavalry, with two Ukrainian divisions, started east.

Pilsudski's plan to federate five or six states to make a bulwark against Bolshevism was far in advance of the time. For success the peasants must have understood it, the Allies must have favored it, the Poles must have stopped their party quarrels and united—three conditions impossible to secure in that troubled, uncertain period. The result was at home a political campaign against him, abroad much discussion of Polish imperialism.

The Polish troops passed the old frontier separating Poland and Russia before the first Partition. Stolidly the Ukrainian peasants looked on, knowing nothing of the meaning of this expedition. Some of them thought these were the czar's troops marching against the Bolsheviks. They did not rise to join their ally. On the seventh of May the Poles reached Kiev and occupied the city without any fighting. In Warsaw there was wild enthusiasm.

So far they had succeeded. Why not push on to Odessa and water the Polish cavalry horses in the Black Sea? To such romantic, ambitious schemes Pilsudski soberly said no. From a military point of view it would be madness: they were far from their base, behind them a people they could not be sure of, their own line stretched out for a thousand kilometers, with no reserves.



PILSUDSKI, CHIEF OF STATE, WITH THE PAPAL LEGATE, MONSIGNOR RATTI,
LATER POPE PIUS XI.



1919 MEETING OF POLISH OFFICERS; ON PILSUDSKI'S LEFT HUGH GIBSON,
AMERICAN CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES AT WARSAW; ON THE RIGHT HERBERT
HOOVER, AMERICAN RELIEF COMMISSION DIRECTOR, AND PADEREWSKI, THE
PREMIER. BETWEEN PILSUDSKI AND HOOVER, WOJCIECHOWSKI, LATER
PRESIDENT OF POLAND.



Photo-Plat

TWO CONTRASTING PHOTOGRAPHS OF PIŁSUDSKI IN 1920. ONE SHOWS HIM SMILING AT A REVIEW OF THE TROOPS; THE OTHER, THE STERNER SIDE OF THE THINKER AND STATESMAN, LOST IN THOUGHT.

The Soviets might invade Poland in the north where were stationed just then the weaker divisions of the Polish army. No, the expedition must go no farther.

Pilsudski announced that Polish troops would remain till a regular Ukrainian government was formed; he hoped it would enter into friendly alliance with Poland. But the Ukrainians were too weak to organize an independent state. After a week the Bolsheviks, reinforced by their groups that had defeated the White armies, attacked Kiev, to eject the Poles from what they considered Russian territory.

Tired out by three years of civil war, the Ukrainians did not support Pilsudski. In June he had to evacuate Kiev and slowly retreat, as another invader of Russia had been forced to do, a century before. Day and night, on flank and rear, the Russian cavalry attacked the Polish detachments. The retreat was not well planned for, it changed to panic, then to flight. There were sharp and sometimes unjust attacks on Pilsudski in the press and in pamphlets distributed to the soldiers. The morale of many regiments was shattered.

This march on Kiev has been denounced as the act of an adventurer, taking a mad risk. It is said that if Pilsudski had not marched to Kiev there would have been no Bolshevik invasion of Poland. People forget that Trotsky's plans were made a year and a half before. If the expedition had been a complete success, it would have weakened the Soviet strength in the south, would have protected Lwow and the Polish oil fields, and perhaps have prevented any invasion in the north. It can not be listed as a complete failure, for the Poles had pushed far beyond any frontier contemplated by the Allies.

To gain time, the Russians spread broadcast the story that the march to Kiev was a Polish move for imperialism. Their agents were very active abroad and bluffed the Allies by promises of favorable trade re-

202 lations—London especially—which were being hindered by Pilsudski's ambitions for Poland's expansion. All the while they were forming and training their armies.

Now Trotski was free to carry out his plans. There was loud applause in the Communist Congress when he announced that he would destroy bourgeois Poland and carry the revolution far to the west.

"The destinies of the World Revolution will be settled in the west," stated the Russian general at the beginning of his advance. "Our way to world-wide conflagration passes over the corpse of Poland."

The destiny of Poland, and of Europe as well, hung in the balance.

An army invading Poland from the east can not march straight west with a long front. There is a natural obstacle, the famous marshes, which forces it to go to the north or to the south, or as happened in 1920, to divide and go both north and south of the marshes. The Soviet general made a mistake in not uniting his forces later. Lwow and the oil fields were the goal of one section in the south, the second section with more men went to the north. There, Pilsudski had foreseen, the main attack would be made.

The offensive began in an unusual way—by secret propaganda among the Poles. They knocked at the door not only with the sword, but with "red" slogans, trying to persuade the people that this was a war against the Polish "whites." This was carried farther; Communist agents had been sent to every large city in Germany to choose leaders, draw up lists of victims, begin a struggle of class against class with all the undermining work of intrigue. Here was a warfare of two fundamentally different systems of civilization.

Nineteen-twenty was too close for men to see the Russian Revolution with perspective and judge it truly. Many persons regarded it as a great historical event, like the French Revolution, without realizing the appalling

danger or the fanatical zeal of the Communists. In every country of Europe large sections of the people were infected by the vigorous propaganda of Moscow. 203

The war was just over. Allies and Central Powers, Western Europe was still divided in counsel as opposed to Soviet enthusiasm. Hatred and suspicions and distrust kept the nations from uniting in defense of their common civilization.

Lenin said, "True strategy consists in deferring the attack till the morale of the enemy has been so undermined that victory can be made both certain and complete."

This maxim the Soviets followed in their invasion in the north of Poland. They were absolutely sure of victory, for they outnumbered the Poles, they had plenty of money and a great amount of equipment taken from the White armies (to whom it had been given by the Allies). They seldom attacked directly. Wherever the Poles held a strong position, they would march around it and announce to the world that this place had been taken—whereas the truth was it had been turned. Then the Poles had to retreat and take up a second position, a third, a fourth; pushed back step by step, their morale was undermined a little more each time.

This method of invading began at the middle of May. The weak Polish force was pushed back sixty miles to Wilno. With the evacuation of Kiev, the Russians concentrated on the north. On the fourth of July they began a more active offensive, with twenty-one divisions of infantry and two of cavalry. Again the Poles had to retreat.

All the year before, with five enemies to contend with, the nation had been either indifferent or blind to the extent of its peril. Suddenly the whole atmosphere changed with the cry, "The country is in danger!" On the first of July a Council of Defense of the State was formed.

An appeal for funds was broadcast through all the land. People gave rings and chains, table silver and jewelry, as before they had done for the Legions. Volunteers enlisted by thousands, men and women and boys and girls.

Pilsudski was commander-in-chief of the army, but the members of this new Council were very distrustful of him. They could not stop quarreling and act unanimously, which was dangerous for the morale of both people and army. Some men urged him to give way before these invaders, to make peace at any price; this broke the enthusiasm of the soldiers and made them lose their self-confidence and their trust in their leader.

The Poles had to give up Wilno, three days later Minsk, then Grodno, then Bialystok. An average of ten miles a day, for six weeks, they were pushed back, back, back. They lost heart. They were demoralized and disorganized. The enemy was coming closer and closer to Warsaw. It was difficult to restore order and discipline, to prevent desertions, to offer any serious resistance.

"Our brilliant successes," the Soviet commander afterward summed it up, "and the continued retreat of the Polish army had finally destroyed their fighting capacity. We were opposed no longer by organized troops. Complete demoralization, absolute want of any confidence and the impossibility of success had undermined the morale of both leaders and men. Sometimes the Poles retired without reason."

On the nineteenth of July Pilsudski warned the Council of Defense.

"Victory depends three-fourths on the morale of the army and the people. Instead of faith and confidence, you show only quarrels, discussions and divisions. You stand near the abyss—perhaps tomorrow you will begin killing each other. I don't know what word I should use to inspire you with a spirit of unity and harmony. If my death would be necessary for that, I would be ready even to blow out my brains. (This was quickly taken up by his enemies and misin-

terpreted, they reporting that he was utterly discouraged and threatened suicide.)

"How make you understand that this is the last moment for salvation? that you must unite and show your unity by forming a strong Cabinet? I am under a fire of accusations. I get disgusted with a state whose representative is treated in such a way. Don't make such a farce by giving me guardians and controllers (they wanted to give him advisers). I put myself at your disposal. Select some one less irritating to you than I am, but give him full confidence and energetic support."

His appeal had some results. The Council left him freedom of movement. Five days later a coalition Cabinet was formed, with the peasant leader Witos as premier.

Meanwhile the Minister of Finance had gone to Spa where the Allies were in conference, to ask for help—for credits and munitions. Pilsudski had not yet succeeded in establishing very cordial relations with the leaders of the Allies. Feeling their way, they had been slow to send the Polish army from France. Now their answer was a vague promise of diplomatic intervention and an attempt to stop hostilities.

Temporarily both Poles and Bolsheviks were to accept the "Curzon line" as their boundary. Neither was to cross it on pain of the Allies' displeasure. They would come to Poland's assistance if the Soviet army crossed it. (Pilsudski had already crossed it in May when he marched to Kiev. The Bolsheviks were already across it on their progress to Warsaw. The Russian committee in London reported to Moscow that England would make threats, but would never put her threats into force.) A vague promise of help from the Allies who were themselves exhausted; and to secure it Poland had to accept frontiers that deprived her of Wilno and left Lwow and Upper Silesia to be settled later. Reluctantly the Minister of Finance agreed. But the next day the Soviets refused this intervention of the Allies, saying they would treat directly with the Poles—and then at every turn delayed the negotiations, drag-

206 ging them out needlessly, knowing that delay was favorable to their military situation. All this time their army was advancing.

The French promised to send munitions and artillery and equipment, but the Germans declared their neutrality and refused to let munition trains cross their territory. The Czech railroad union refused to run trains with supplies for Poland. Then they were shipped by water to Danzig where the dockers refused to unload them, and officials said to the anxious Poles, "Take them somewhere else—land them at Gdynia!" It took time to get Allied warships on the spot and threaten to unload the precious stores with the help of sailors. By the time the French supplies were actually in the hands of the Polish troops at the front, the great emergency of August had passed.

England too talked of sending munitions, but there was a delay in shipping them. The Bolsheviks were making strenuous propaganda for trade and both Trade Unionists and British Socialists were crying, "Hands off Russia!" The Poles were fighting Russia, therefore they must be in the wrong.

And then another country heard Poland's cry for help. The Hungarians had had their own experience with Bolshevism for several tragic months, and now they promptly sent what munitions they could to the Poles—sixty-one million cartridges and two hundred and forty rolling kitchens—routing them by a round-about way through Roumania to avoid crossing Czecho-Slovakia.

But if England and France gave little material aid, there was one thing they could give generously—advice. Uninvited, each country sent a Mission to advise the Poles, Lord D'Abernon and Ambassador Jusserand on the diplomatic side, General Weygand and General Radcliffe on the military side. Exactly what they were to do was not very clearly defined. Indeed some of the Polish

officers, high in command, never understood why they were there. It was one more instance of western psychology, "You ask for help, we'll show you what to do." 207

Looked at objectively, it is not hard to understand why at first things did not go quite smoothly between the Missions and Pilsudski. General Weygand, the head of the French group, was one of the most distinguished of French generals, with a fine military record. He had been chief of staff for Marshal Foch and had taken part in the battle of the Marne. With him came a few dozen officers from the French General Staff. A soldier by profession, he must have felt suspicious of an "amateur." Where had Pilsudski studied strategy? To what school did he belong? What experience had he had in handling large masses of soldiers? in trench warfare and the most modern methods of fighting? Why wasn't the advice of the Missions eagerly listened to and promptly acted on? Weren't the Poles grateful for such help from the Allies?

Pilsudski appeared to be an adventurer or a military parvenu, to many people in western Europe. He had bitter personal enemies in Poland. The long retreat had lowered his prestige. There was shrugging of shoulders, then murmurs of dissatisfaction, followed by bitter complaints of his old-fashioned strategy. Some men argued that he should not be Chief of State and also commander-in-chief of the army, that he should be forced to follow the views of other authorities. All this feeling was passed on to the Missions.

The truth was, Pilsudski had not the equipment for the new methods of fighting that had been worked out in the World War. There was, for example, one Polish army which had one hundred and forty-five cannon, small and medium size. According to the French calculations, so many guns for every so many meters of front, they should have had one thousand, three hundred and

208 twenty. The Missions were, at first, slow to realize how desperate was the need for all war equipment.

The Poles had tried to make a stand against the invaders on the river Niemen, but that position could not be held; at the river Bug they did succeed in holding the Russians back for almost a week, then this too was lost and the long retreat continued. Defenders and attackers were coming closer and closer to the capital. A cavalry force of eight thousand enabled the Soviets to outflank the Poles, leaving them no recourse but to retire again.

Pilsudski summoned to Warsaw the general commanding in the north. He was sick and at the end of his nervous strength. His troops, he reported, were completely demoralized, there were no fresh men available, the best thing to do would be to make peace immediately, on whatever terms were offered, for the war was completely lost. The chief listened with his lips pressed tight together. This was no time for "nerves," especially for him.

The enemy had advanced three hundred miles, driving the Polish army before them—not so much driving as outmanoeuvring, outflanking. Their host of spies, propagandists, and secret agents undermined the resistance of the people with a service no less effective than that of the soldiers. The Poles seemed utterly discouraged and incapable of any further effort. The Soviets were only a few miles from Warsaw, with no obstruction to delay their advance.

This initial success of the Bolshevik army caused great excitement through Communist circles in Europe. Warsaw would undoubtedly fall by the middle of August. That would be the prelude to Communist success in Prague and Berlin. How far would this victory over Poland take them? How great would be the echoes in the world beyond?

"Politics gave the Red Army a difficult problem to solve," wrote the Russian commander, "risky, audacious. At the announcement of our offensive, the revolutionary movement blazed up through the working classes of western Europe. This fire would not have been limited to the Polish frontiers. Like an impetuous torrent it would have inundated all the west. The class war would not have been interrupted and would have swept over central Europe." Indeed the title of his book, *The Advance Beyond the Vistula*, tells with eloquent brevity what the Bolsheviks had in mind.

For more than a year Pilsudski had been giving nearly all his time to the building up of an army. By the spring of 1920 he had a sizable force at his command, but it was not yet a seasoned group of veterans, welded into a fighting unit. It had men trained in German, Austrian, Russian methods, men who had been fighting against each other for four years. It had recruits who scarcely knew how to manage their rifles. It takes time to make an army; relatively very few were veterans of training. One of the French generals said that the Polish soldiers, not counting one or two divisions, looked like an assembly of recruits.

There were some groups forming a notable exception to this general description—in particular one from Poznan, and the Legions. They were like Napoleon's "old soldiers." They had absorbed some of the Commander's boldness and daring. Only now were the full results of his work from 1908 to 1917 to bear fruit.

Not only was the Polish army new, it was miserably equipped. Pilsudski said he had never seen such a parcel of ragamuffins. Many of the men had no boots. All kinds of war material were lacking—airplanes, signaling apparatus, munitions.

But they had some good points which the English and French Missions were forced to recognize and later to admire: they had extraordinary endurance. They were

210 brave and enthusiastic, once they were caught up in a wave of patriotism, once they could overcome their despair. They had one other great advantage—at their head was Jozef Pilsudski.

The Russian army had more soldiers than the Poles, as it approached Warsaw, and was better equipped. It had been reinforced by troops set free by the end of the fighting with the White armies, and by prisoners taken from them. Their efficiency was greatly increased by supplies captured from Kolchak and Denikin and Wrangel. They had munitions in abundance. But they had very poor railroad communication and the farther they marched into Poland, the more trouble with their communications; for the retreating Poles destroyed railroad tracks and signals and radio stations. The Soviets were using peasant carts with ponies, which they requisitioned as they went along. Ten or fifteen thousand carts followed each army, but even so they had too few.

At their head was Tuchaczewski (Tuk-hatch-shev'-skee), formerly a sub-lieutenant in the Imperial Guards at St. Petersburg, who in March of 1917 had offered his services to Trotski. At the time of this invasion he was twenty-eight years old. Nearly all the Soviet officers were very young. They had some men from the former Russian staffs, but their advice was not followed. The commander-in-chief was fiercely ambitious, full of ardor, but with no technical training and with little culture. He was not, as he thought, a Napoleon. He believed neither in God nor the devil, but he was ambitious to dominate the world and he had great faith in the Communist Revolution.

His army was made up of peasants, forced to go to the war, or of Communists, promised all the looting they desired in Warsaw and Berlin. In case of a reverse, they had little morale to stiffen them. With each command went a Commissioner of the people, who drove

them into the battle. With some went Chinese torturers, ready to punish disobedient or delinquent troopers. 211

As to numbers, the two commanders do not agree. Tuchaczewski says he had, when the offensive began on the fourth of July, a hundred and sixty thousand men and the Poles ninety-five thousand. Pilsudski says the Soviets had a hundred and eighty thousand and the Poles were a hundred and fifty thousand. It is certain that the Russians were more at the beginning, but as they marched south and west toward Warsaw, their force diminished as many of their peasant soldiers wandered off into the forests. The Polish force increased, on the contrary, as more volunteers joined the ranks of the defenders. The nearer both armies came to the capital, the more the figures altered till the Poles had perhaps thirty thousand more than the enemy.

The English and French Missions reached Warsaw on the twenty-fifth of July. For a week they were occupied with helping in the preparations, and here they gave invaluable aid. They speeded up the sending of supplies to the front. They urged the Poles to take energetic measures to collect stragglers and deserters. Their staff were scattered through the various Polish divisions, serving as liaison officers, and by their very presence restoring the courage of the soldiers who were exhausted by the long retreat. It was a moral comfort to know that able Frenchmen were there, giving new life and vigor to the troops at the front. Their technical aid brought order and method to the operations of the Polish army. During that week the enemy came still nearer to Warsaw, but the defenders' resistance was stiffening.

For a month the Russians had advanced rapidly, meeting with slight opposition from the Poles. Tuchaczewski wanted to take Warsaw as soon as possible, there proclaim the Communist Revolution with the aid of the Polish Communists, and add Poland once more

to the Russian empire. The world would accept this *fait accompli*. Then they would march on to the west. He did not trouble himself to insure regular supplies. As the Soviets neared the capital, they were sure the Poles could not rally.

Here the Russian leader made a serious mistake. Instead of concentrating all his forces in front of Warsaw until the city fell, he divided them into four sections. One he sent along the frontier of East Prussia to take Torun and so cut Warsaw off from Dantzic and the sea. The second was to circle around Warsaw to the northwest, cross the Vistula below the city, and come up ready to attack it from the west—the same plan the Russians had followed with great success in 1831. The third, on the south, was to take Lwow—thus the left wing was entirely unprotected, hanging in the air. And the fourth, the center, was to attack Warsaw. The last month justified Tuchaczewski's view that the Polish army, exhausted and demoralized by the long retreat, was incapable of any serious resistance. He could take the capital any day he chose. It would be better to wait till his troops were on the other side of the Vistula, ready to cut off any retreat to the west. He was cocksure of himself—too sure, too confident of victory; he paid little attention to the movements of the forces opposed to him.

All this time while one side was advancing and the other drawing back, negotiations for an armistice and peace went on and on. The Soviets pretended to the Allies, to the world at large, that they were ready for peace, but that was little more than a blind. What they really wanted was to gain time for further advance, for their propaganda in Poland to bear fruit. After they were in possession of Warsaw and the Polish army was destroyed, negotiations could be taken up seriously—with a Communistic Poland, they hoped.

Lord D'Abernon published, some years later, the diary he kept during that dramatic month in Warsaw.

It gives interesting first-hand pictures of events and people, as seen by a sympathetic outsider. He realized what clever negotiators the Bolsheviks were, with a vast amount of promises to offer, which they would keep or not as they might find convenient. He noted the many delays—six that were deliberately planned, he was sure. Conferences were postponed. Once the Polish delegation found no Soviet delegation to discuss terms with. The Poles were sincere, the Russians were using talk of peace as a cloak to gain time.

Finally the long-talked of armistice terms were announced: the Polish army to be demobilized, save for a bare fifty thousand men, and this within one month; all arms to be given over to the Bolsheviks, except what the fifty thousand would need; all war industries to be demobilized also. Extravagant and humiliating terms that no people could consider. They shut the door on negotiations and proved that Poland's safety could be secured only by fighting. All their glib talk of peace was a mask of delay while they advanced three hundred kilometers. Once the Poles intercepted a radio message from one Russian commander to another:

"We have arranged not to inform the Poles of our armistice terms before August fourth. You have therefore four additional days to continue fighting."

The French and English Missions were amazed at Warsaw's attitude. The enemy were at the very gates, but there was little excitement in the city—no signs of alarm and panic, the proportion of men to women on the street about normal, no evidence that the manhood of Poland had gone to fight. The large number of religious processions was the only unusual feature.

It was summer and the chief concern of the peasants was to get the harvest in. The peasant premier left the city at the end of July, during this great crisis, to look after his land. One of the Englishmen compared it

214 to the game of bowls that had to be finished when the Spanish Armada was sighted; but getting in the Polish harvest was no amusement, it involved the food supply of a nation that had recently known devastation and hunger.

General Weygand had first advised abandoning the capital, reassembling the Polish troops west of the Vistula, and then attacking the enemy in force. Give up Warsaw, give up Lwow; then attack from north to south. Naturally the Poles found it hard to accept this plan. Pilsudski said he could not give up the capital—not without resisting its capture to the last. It was decided to put the city in a state of defense.

Twenty kilometers out, in less than a fortnight, they put up a treble entanglement of barbed wire, with trenches dug for the supporting troops. Closer in there was a second line of barbed wire. Batteries of artillery were put in position, especially by the bridges. In all of this work the experience of the French staff officers was of invaluable assistance. There were fifty thousand men defending Warsaw, plus forty-three batteries of artillery. The French insisted that if the Poles would fight, their capital ought not to be lost.

On the second of August Pilsudski returned to the city from an inspection trip to the front. The Poles had had to give up their position on the river Bug. There was now no obstacle between the enemy and Warsaw. There were no reserves to prevent their advance. Farther south the Polish troops were resisting better, for the best regiments were there.

Pilsudski, his chief of staff, the generals commanding at Warsaw, the French and English advisers met to discuss the situation. He offered to share the command with Weygand, with all its responsibilities, but the French general tactfully refused, explaining that he knew neither the Polish troops nor their commanders, and he would remain as technical adviser to the General Staff. After

the first abrupt contacts their relations grew smoother and more practically effective. 215

Warfare in Poland was very different from fighting in the west. Cavalry were more useful than the trenches of Flanders. There was the natural prejudice against foreign officers. There was the language difficulty, the delays caused by interpreting. The French lacked acquaintance with local conditions. All in all, General Weygand was wise not to accept the supreme command. In the most critical days his role was passive.

"He (Weygand) declared very justly and with much good sense," writes Pilsudski, "that the command of troops so rapidly formed as ours, when he was ignorant of their real value and of the chiefs, of what one could demand of them, was for him impossible. That is why he contented himself with expressing theoretical judgments and, so far as concerned me, abstained from exerting the least pressure on my decisions and resolutions, such as they were."

For three days conferences went on at the offices of the Polish General Staff. They all agreed, Poles, French, English, that a defense, foot by foot, on the present front would lead to nothing. A counter-offensive was necessary, like that of Joffre at the Marne; and General Weygand proposed duplicating the plan of Marshal Foch—using the Vistula which formed a natural obstacle, reorganizing the troops behind it, with new levies and volunteers, and then a vigorous attack from the left wing near Modlin. Pilsudski thought this could not be done successfully, either at Modlin or at Warsaw, with the total force of the enemy opposing.

The others talked and talked while Pilsudski listened. To Weygand he seemed a leader of grim manner, taciturn, looking in upon himself for guidance. The English diarist wrote:

"Pilsudski is a pronounced sceptic about orthodox methods, in military affairs as in political. He loves danger. He claims in actual fighting his methods, though unusual and not conforming to textbook practice, have always proved success-

ful. It is difficult to classify him, he belongs to no school; his method was not to employ great masses, for he didn't have them; not trench warfare, for he dug no trenches; not the strategy of combined action, with troops in close formation. His troops moved freely in large spaces."

There is a touch of grim humor in Pilsudski's own account of those long, fruitless conferences.

"In all those conversations the Marne was very often mentioned. General Weygand and General Sosnkowski (Minister of War) showed a particular fondness for the Marne. As Marshal Joffre had between him and the enemy a large river and a small one, the Seine and the Marne, in order to regroup his forces on the side toward Paris, so here they tried to find a small river and a large one, the San and the Vistula, which should protect a powerful manouever on the left wing in the direction of Modlin-Warsaw. In both cases, the plan was to attack from the left wing, clearing a passage to the capital."

This was all very interesting, but it was theoretical. "It is the reality of things which commands, gentlemen," Napoleon used to say. Pilsudski had never been to a military school, but he had taught himself military history and strategy. He was always the realist and at this critical time he knew that rules and principles of strategy must be applied to the situation in hand with common sense, not rigidly and brutally. Just there lie the difficulties for the strategist—in applying rules, considering the land, all the circumstances, the men available. He knew, better than the visiting Missions, what conditions were on the front in Poland; he knew, better than they, the value of his material.

On the evening of August fifth he left the conference at the General Staff offices and went off to the Belvedere to think things out. With a supply of cigarettes, he shut himself up in his room and all night long he walked up and down, thinking, thinking. The burden of the chief command was on his shoulders. The fate of Warsaw, of Poland, rested on him. He must reach a decision—and then carry it out. He must be cold-blooded

and calm, keeping a quiet mind; no "nerves" now. And **217**
his plans once made, he must work with superhuman
energy. The result of that solitary night at the Bel-
vedere is known in history as the battle of Warsaw.

On the table before him was a large map of Poland.
Pacing up and down, he often stopped before it, trying
to work out a simple, practical plan that would save
the country in this emergency. East and north and
northwest of Warsaw were the enemy. Then the battle
would be at Warsaw. Must it fall a third time into
the hands of the Russians? He thought of 1794 when
Kosciuszko's insurrection failed and the Russian gen-
eral ordered the massacre of twenty thousand of its in-
habitants; and of 1831 when the Russian troops encircled
it and a telegram was sent to the czar, "Warsaw lies
at the feet of Your Majesty." And now—a third time?

Suddenly he recalled how the Polish commander in
1831 sent a picked body of men to the southeast of
Warsaw, hoping to cause a division of the enemy's force:
if in August of 1920 an attack could be made on the
invaders, drawn up before the city, from the south, would
it save the situation? Was it practical? It would mean
putting the capital to a frightful test, with the battle
before her very walls—its wave might flow back into the
streets of the city—the morale of a civilian population
is easily affected—their panic spreads to the soldiers—
how long could they hold out?

He began to weigh the possibilities of this plan. For
an efficient counter-attack from a Polish right wing
(which he must create), striking the Russians from the
south, he must have soldiers. Where to get them? Some
from the troops down in the south. Could any men be
spared from Warsaw itself? Perhaps, if the front there
were withdrawn still farther? That would take time.
Would the Bolsheviks continue their advance and com-
pletely surround Warsaw on the north—and perhaps,
after they crossed the Vistula, on the west also? That

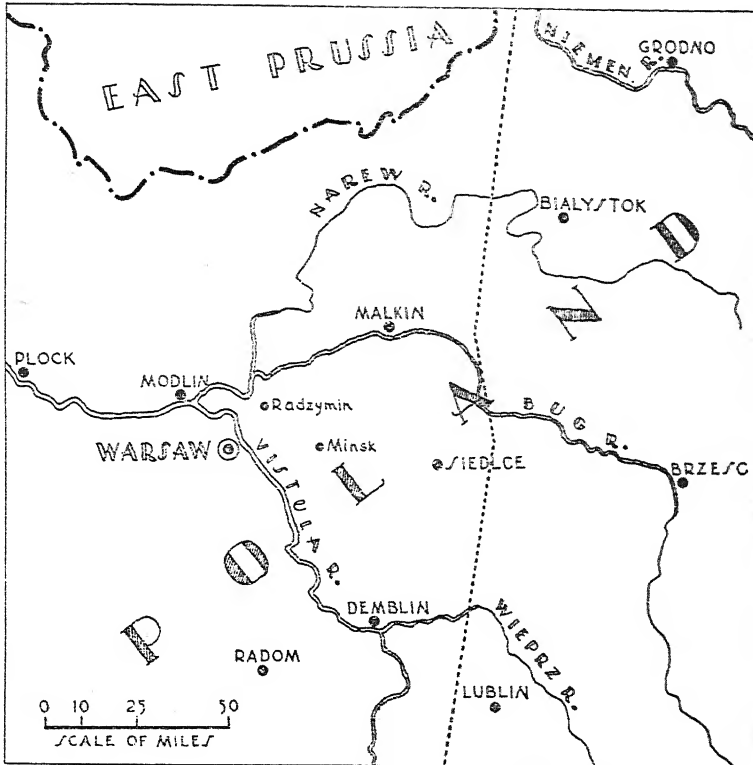
218 would take time too, and loss of time for them was gain for the Poles. What if the Soviet cavalry, under the redoubtable Boudienny, came towards the city from the south? Polish rapidity must give the Russians no chance to cross the river.

He was confident the morale of the soldiers would improve if their retreat stopped at the Vistula, if he took them in hand and they knew they were taking part in a planned attack. Poles were always better at attacking than defending. They would respond when he pointed out the distress of the country, the dangers of a Soviet victory, the necessity of winning at whatever cost—to save Poland. He knew his men had a greater moral force than the enemy, and that they had confidence in him.

The question of supplies—they had little ammunition, but the manouever itself was more important than firing. Not guns, but the legs of Polish soldiers would bring victory. Food they would find in the country, or take it from the Russian carts.

Conditions necessary for success—first, men enough to execute his plan. His strongest troops, the Legionaries, must be distributed wisely and with the others make a net into which the enemy would fall. Second, surprise; he must assemble the attacking force secretly, concealing their movements from Russian spies, and then advance very rapidly. Third, he must convince his colleagues.

His mind began to plan far ahead. They must work toward Malkin where the main line of retreat of the Russians would pass the river Bug. As the manouever developed, the Soviet commander must alter his plans. The Poles would be taking the initiative instead of remaining subordinate to the Russians. Once the attack was launched, Tuchaczewski would think, getting the first news at his headquarters at Minsk, that it was not a serious offensive. Some hours would pass before he



THE BATTLE OF WARSAW—AUGUST, 1920

On this map the dotted line shows the "Curzon line" proposed by the Allies as the Polish-Russian boundary. On their march to Warsaw, the Bolsheviks advanced as far as the village of Radzymin and circled around the city to Plock; but all attempts to cross the Vistula there and strike the capital from the west failed. South of the Wieprz river, Pilsudski assembled five and a half divisions for a sudden flank attack on the Soviet lines. Two percent, he thought his chance of success. Soon the invaders were fleeing in panic. His figure began to go up.

220 realized the situation, then it would be too late to remedy it.

Pilsudski's master, Napoleon, once wrote to one of his generals, "In war one sees his own evils, one doesn't see those of the enemy. It is necessary to show confidence." Another saying of his ran, "He is a bad chief who begins his calculations by adding up his weaknesses." Instead of laying stress on the smallness of his force, Pilsudski listed his advantages—and the weak points of his opponents.

The Polish strategical position was good, with cross communication by railroad. The Soviet forces were spread over a wide area, with no reserves and little cross communication. The Polish soldier might be prompt to flinch, but he was also prompt to revive. The Bolsheviks gave way at the least check. Pilsudski knew the psychology of both.

What was the Soviet army's situation? In spite of all their success, were they in excellent state, materially and morally? They had advanced so rapidly, it must have been difficult for their supplies to follow. The railroad service destroyed by the retreating Poles, they had to use carts; then their needs must be many. Moreover, they were tired.

The Russian troops were made up of two classes—peasants, by now extremely weary of the war; they had been taken by force and assembled by chance; they had no enthusiasm for this campaign; at the moment it started, a considerable number of deserters had been forced into the ranks; they would leave again on occasion. Then the Communists, eager for plunder—if there be no risk; they had been promised the pillage of Warsaw and were still full of ardor, but theirs was an ardor the least setback would destroy.

If Pilsudski threw on their rear, as they were attacking the approaches to the city, a force sufficient to sweep off their carts, their munitions, their food sup-

plies, what would happen? Even if he had only a few divisions, the raid would cause total disorder in the rear of the Russian armies. The demoralization would be immediate and complete. Tuchaczewski would be taken by surprise, not expecting such a revival of strength from an army retreating constantly for weeks. His only resource would be prompt retreat, saving what supplies he could, and regrouping his troops on the other side of the river Bug or the Narew; and that could be done only in great disorder, for the Poles would cut telephone lines and destroy radio stations, so that there would be no connections between the army and their headquarters at Minsk. All this would provoke the disordered flights which Napoleon demanded in his manouvers.

It was to be not a regular battle, but a strategic action against the enemy's lines of communication. It demanded long thinking out, for there were a large number of factors, any one of which could make it fail. All night long the commander-in-chief walked up and down, thinking out his manouver. He set himself agonizing questions to answer.

Taking into account the lamentable state of the Polish soldiers, were they capable of carrying out his plan? Were their morale and their zeal high enough? What if Boudienny's cavalry gave up its move against Lwow and advanced on Warsaw? What if the Soviets crossed the Vistula below the city and surrounded it from the west? They must not be given time to make that crossing.

Was there not a desperate risk in taking the initiative, when the Bolsheviks had advanced so far, apparently invincible? Yes, a maximum risk, in the face of a conquering foe. Therefore he alone must take the responsibility. Warsaw might not be able to hold out. For the next fortnight the fate of Poland would rest on his will power and his nerves. Later many persons

were to say that it was Pilsudski's imperturbable calm and steadfastness that won the day. He went straight to his goal, like a blind man—or a hero. He had this unusual psychological power: once his mind was made up, he could take a decisive action and face the inevitable risks the moment might produce. In military affairs "impossible" was not in his vocabulary.

The counter-attack must be commanded by one man. Contrary to all common sense, the most difficult task fell to the smaller force which must make the decisive move. To Pilsudski it seemed only right that he should assume the command himself and take the responsibility not only for making the plan, but for carrying it out. He could do that, because his training in the past had accustomed him to the heaviest responsibilities.

It would be possible to risk such a manouever, since he was both Chief of State and commander-in-chief. If Poland had had a normal parliamentary government, he would have had to consult his subordinates, deputies and senators; the Cabinet would have summoned experts to give their views on his plan; in many ways he would have been delayed. As a Frenchman declared later, the cooks in every regiment would have known all its details, and also the cooks of the enemy. It was indeed fortunate for Poland that in this emergency one man held all the power in his hands.

For and against, he weighed all the chances, considered all the risks. The Poles might lose Lwow and all that southeast district. For Warsaw, the danger of panic from fear of capture; with such a large population, made up of many races and many political parties, how much strain could it withstand? Would the Russians attack and take the city before his manouever had time to show results? A risk? Yes, a last chance, staking all on this one card. If he did not take the risk, failure stared him in the face; if he took it, he fig-

ired the chance of winning at two in a hundred--not 22"
more than two per cent.

"Everything," reads the entry for August sixteenth in the Englishman's diary, "depends on the flank attack. This starts today. It is a gambler's throw. A bold stroke in the unorthodox Pilsudski manner may disconcert the whole Russian plan and break up the attack."

When dawn came on the morning of the sixth of August, his decision was taken. He summoned the chief of staff and dictated the orders necessary for the manouever: the north front to retreat again; three divisions to go south by forced march to the Wieprz (Vee-apsh), a little river flowing into the Vistula; from the troops already in the south, as many as could be spared, especially the Legionaries, to withdraw and march north to the Wieprz; Warsaw to hold out for ten or twelve days, under all circumstances, until the attack on the rear of the Russian lines began to make some impression.

This historic order made four printed pages, for it explained the manouever in detail. Pilsudski remembered the vague orders he used to receive from the Austrians in 1914, confused and contradictory, telling so little that he could not guess how the task assigned him could fit into the operations as a whole. Now copies of his complete plan were sent to all the Polish generals. That was another risk, for the manouever was endangered if one copy came into the enemy's hands.

Unfortunately that very thing occurred. A Polish officer was killed and on his body the Soviets found Pilsudski's order which showed plainly that the Poles were preparing a counter-offensive against the Russian left wing from the region of the Wieprz. It was discussed by the Soviet staff who made up their minds that it could not be genuine, for the units mentioned were fighting desperately in the south, some eighty miles from the position assigned them. Therefore it was false and they paid no attention to it.

Almost at the same hour Tuchaczewski was making his plan. If only Pilsudski had known what it was to be, if he could have known—or imagined—that not all the Soviet troops were to be used for the direct attack on Warsaw, but that fourteen divisions would be sent off on a long march, to cross a river, and cut the Poles off from Dantzic and the sea, how much anxiety he might have been spared!

Pilsudski had to do far more than plan the manouver. His colleagues felt no confidence in it, so impressed were they by the lamentable state of the troops. They weren't sure the city could hold out.

"It is with soldiers badly equipped and demoralized," the chief of staff argued with him, "that you're going to try such vast operations. Are you basing on this counter-attack the fate of Poland? Don't you see that if the manouver fails, it is disaster irremediable? Make your manouver if you insist, but don't touch the forces that prudence commands to leave on our left."

It was Pilsudski who had to brace up the hesitating doubters and show the resolution necessary. He did not share their fears, yet to satisfy them he had to sacrifice something of his plan. They insisted on his sending reinforcements to the left wing of the Polish army in the north, so that he had fewer men for the counter-attack. Instead of putting all their confidence in him and his manouver, their only thought was to hold the Russians in front of Warsaw; they could not see that once the push from the south on the enemy's rear was well under way, the farther the Russians advanced north and west of the city, the more they were walking into a trap from which there would be no retreat. To them the capital was all that was at stake.

The next six days were keenly anxious ones for Pilsudski, waiting for his men to assemble on the Wieprz. The place was well chosen, for the Russians would think they were making ready to advance against the cavalry

of Boudienny and the Soviet troops far to the south. It was necessary to withdraw the front lines at the north and regroup the defenders of Warsaw. In many places they broke contact with the various Soviet columns—a deliberate move to give them a breathing space to regain their morale. Another risk: the north of the city was left open—a danger spot. With feverish interest Pilsudski watched the development of his plan and studied constantly the movements of the enemy. 225

Assembling the troops for the counter-attack was in itself a complicated manouver. Both north and south, they were in direct contact with the Soviets. One group had to be disengaged from the fighting on the river Bug and make a dangerous flank march to reach the rendezvous by the Wieprz. Two divisions were to come from the vicinity of Lwow, a hundred and fifty miles distant. Pilsudski himself said the task he had given them was beyond average human capacity; he thought only one division would arrive; the second he would not let himself think about. But in the most skillful way their general cut a passage through the forces of the enemy and arrived on time with all the men ordered by the Commander—a glorious exploit.

For Warsaw that fortnight was full of the most terrible anxiety and full of drama. At any moment the Russians might begin a general attack. The people could hear the thunder of the artillery, coming always nearer. Thousands of volunteers were building field defenses east of the city and putting up more barbed wire. The streets were crowded with peasant carts, refugees with their household goods fleeing before the Bolshevik advance. By order of the Minister of War they unloaded their carts and carried supplies and munitions out to the front lines, returning with the wounded. The growling sound of cannon was so near that people could distinguish the separate shots.

The civilian population knew something of the plans for the counter-attack and supported it in an inspired

226 way. Cabinet ministers resigned to put on the uniform of private soldiers. Their example was followed by practically the whole university and the general staff college. But—would Pilsudski come in time? They counted in hours, not days. He left Warsaw on the evening of the twelfth.

Tuchaczewski issued his famous order beginning, "On to Warsaw!" He was too sure of success. The last few weeks had been too easy. Warsaw was ready to be seized; that would mean the fall of Poland and then a Polish Soviet state serving as their base for carrying the Revolution into the heart of Europe. How far past Warsaw would this victory take him? He was first ambitious for himself, and secondly, was anxious to extend Communism. He should have attacked the city at once, but decided to wait a few days till two divisions could come from Brzesc to cover his left wing.

In the different government offices in the capital people worked feverishly, packing important papers to be sent away. Engines waited at the railroad station with steam up, to take officials to the southwest of Poland, on the one line available. The Foreign Office notified the Diplomatic Corps to leave on the evening of the thirteenth. The French and English Missions stayed, the Papal Nuncio (Monsignor Ratti, later Pope Pius XI), the Italian Minister, and the American and the Danish *chargés d'affaires*. There was no panic in the streets, though the enemy were only nine miles distant—closer than the Germans came to Paris in 1914.

August the thirteenth and fourteenth and fifteenth, the Russians attacked along their whole main front, north of Warsaw. They met with some local successes. At one place they pierced the first Polish line of defense and took the village of Radzymin. After heroic efforts the Poles recaptured it. There died the young priest Skorupka who marched into the thickest of the fray, carrying the cross, followed by his schoolboys

from the *gimnazjum* and a troop of Boy Scouts. Later the village changed hands again. There was fierce fighting along its streets, but the second line of the Polish defense held firm. A Soviet cavalry patrol rode even closer to the city. Then for the first time a panic note came into the messages sent off to Pilsudski. By the sixteenth the Russians were tired out. 227

On the left wing of the Polish army, northwest of the capital, there was sharp fighting. The Russians were amazed to find their advance held up at this point and their plans delayed. They could not dislodge the Poles from their position at Modlin, they could not outflank them. The stout resistance, due to the discipline and fighting qualities of the general in command there, was an unpleasant surprise for Tuchaczewski who had thought all the Polish troops concentrated at Warsaw, and that here they would find only scattered and demoralized regiments.

There was sharp fighting too at Plock where the Soviets were trying to cross the Vistula. In the emergency reinforcements for the Poles—a whole battalion—arrived from the capital by motor buses.

These delays—at Radzymin and Modlin and Plock—were of enormous value since they gave Pilsudski what he needed most—time. Quickly, silently he had assembled five and a half divisions of infantry and some cavalry. On the twelfth of August there had been a last conference at the General Staff offices. The city, said Pilsudski, with the artillery and airplanes available now, *must* hold out. The attacking Russians would meet with heavy losses. They must be closely held by the Warsaw garrison so that they could not possibly rush troops to resist the counter-attack. That could not come till the seventeenth, for the men making it must have some rest and their morale must be bolstered up. Two days must be counted for them to come close enough to Warsaw for the two forces to combine. His last words were an ap-

228 peal to the generals left in the city to make a great effort to stop disputing, to bring to an end the anarchy of command.

With a staff of five, he motored up the left bank of the Vistula. It seemed absurd to be starting for a manouver, leaving ten divisions, nearly half the total Polish forces, to play a passive role. It was against all logic, all the sane laws of warfare, and he felt a certain disgust of himself that the Poles were so weak and powerless that he was forced to adopt such an absurd policy.

Some of the men had three days' rest, some had two, some only one. They had come by forced marches, with some fighting, and he insisted on their resting. He wanted time to inspect them. He noted their poor equipment and the state of their uniforms. In one division half the men were practically barefoot. Yet their condition was better than he had expected.

He passed among them, taking notes, inspiring them by his presence and his words, giving them the confidence on which everything depended. For an operation so delicate, so full of risk, he needed that much time to raise their morale.

"What is the mood of your men?" he appealed to one colonel.

"Good, if only we go forward."

"All right," responded another officer, "but we can not go back."

The password was announced—march to the north!

In the days at his disposal, Pilsudski succeeded in rousing their confidence, down to the last soldier. In his plan moral forces counted more than the number of men involved. They would win, he told them, "by the legs and the bravery of the Polish foot-soldier."

Those rest days were used too in putting things to rights, as far as possible. The reinforcements had been haphazardly distributed in the great hurry; men with French guns were assigned to groups with German guns,

230 they went in zigzags which greatly prolonged the march. There was light, easy combat, skirmishes of no importance; here and there they met small parties who dispersed and fled; they made no real attacks. Success, from the moment this movement was launched, and that success continued.

The Soviets were headed westward, the Poles were marching northward; it was a flank attack on the rear of the unsuspecting invaders, a manouever that was a great favorite of Napoleon who used it repeatedly and with astonishing results. The Bolsheviks here were unprepared for meeting any Polish troops, they were hampered by the endless train of wagons and horses following their detachments; they could not turn quickly to meet the attack directly; they could only retreat.

Pilsudski spent the whole day motoring here and there to get information. He went principally to the left wing. Nowhere did he find the Russian cavalry of whom he had heard so much, nowhere the divisions of Soviet infantry before which the Poles had been retreating.

There was one large and dangerous gap where Bou-dienny's cavalry might slip through and fall on the rear of the counter-attack. If that commander learned of it and pushed his men quickly to this point, the whole manouever would fail. It was a dreadful moment. Pilsudski ordered a detachment to hurry, to fill in the gap. They went on the run, so hot and so weary their tongues were hanging out. He felt safe only when the dangerous space was filled in.

He urged the men forward, notwithstanding their fatigue. By evening all divisions had made thirty kilometers or more. All night they marched. On, always on. He had one aim, to reach Warsaw, and to this he set his iron, forward-driving will. Two per cent—his figure began to go up. Perhaps, perhaps the manouever would succeed. Too exhausted to think, the Polish sol-

diers had one great advantage—behind them stood Pilsudski. The real miracle of the Vistula was that he passed on to each and every man something of his own brutal urge forward, something of his own spirit.

Now full of confidence and ardor, they met only surprised Bolsheviks who hurried to retreat. Back of Tuchaczewski's lines confusion reigned. The Poles captured whole herds of cattle and thousands of peasant carts with supplies. One colonel took prisoner ten women, wives or mistresses of some Soviet officers, who had come to buy stockings and frocks in the Warsaw shops; they were anxious lest they arrive too late, after the town was already looted. One was the wife of a general commanding a division, who had come in a splendid carriage with high-stepping horses; he had her driven to headquarters.

In a few hours the left wing of the Soviet army, undefended and hanging in the air, was almost completely destroyed. There were ten thousand prisoners. The rest of the men were rolling northeast in a hurried flight that soon became a rout. In June and July the Poles had retreated, now the tables were turned and it was the Russians who were being pushed back, but in far greater numbers. An orderly withdrawal was not possible, especially with troops not sure of themselves, burdened with long lines of non-combatants, and the column of baggage carts choking the streets of village or town. Wild panic broke out. The whole Russian front trembled.

The seventeenth Pilsudski spent in his motor, seeking for the phantom enemy and trying to discover the traps he feared. That afternoon his men met a Polish division marching out from Warsaw. So efficiently had communications been cut that it was only on the evening of this day that the Soviets attacking the city learned of his march. They commenced a precipitate retreat at once. On the next day the Russians were going back,

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232 all along the line. One Soviet commander knew nothing of Pilsudski's move until the eighteenth, and then by a chance telephone talk. Their cavalry made no report at all.

Warsaw was safe; and with Warsaw Poland was saved; and with Poland Europe was saved. The Bolshevik Revolution was not to be carried westward over the corpse of Poland. It was not to reign in Prague and Berlin. As once before, when in the seventeenth century the siege of Vienna was raised, the Poles had saved western civilization. And this was accomplished with the minimum of lives lost, with troops that were "exhausted," "demoralized," "incapable of further resistance."

Twenty-one Soviet infantry divisions had advanced to capture Warsaw. Seven were taken prisoner, six were broken up, eight retreated in dire disorder.

How was such a victory possible? Partly through the mistakes of Tuchaczewski, who left his lines of communication unprotected, relying on Boudienny's cavalry to keep the Polish right occupied; whose general met such a stout resistance northwest of the capital; who had scattered his forces instead of keeping them concentrated before Warsaw; whose orders for support were disregarded by his generals in both the north and the south—one of them set out six days after he received the order! Pilsudski's bold manouever succeeded beyond expectations, because the moral force of the Soviet troops depended largely on Commissioners who drove the men forward from the rear, so that they were particularly sensitive to any attack there.

Yes, Warsaw was safe, but to Pilsudski that was only a first step. He had pushed his men to the limit, demanding of them prodigious endurance and forced marches; but he could not give them a rest now. To extract the most from their victory the Russians must be followed up and completely routed, not allowed to

rally and advance again. There must be energetic pursuit and a push from all directions, to destroy the rest of the Bolshevist forces. On the eighteenth he started to Warsaw by motor.

To his surprise he heard no cannon. People stopped his car enthusiastically to tell him that the enemy were fleeing on all sides in disorder and panic. They thought his journey was not safe, as the surrounding country was infested with marauding Soviet cavalry and dispersed soldiers. At one place he found some Poles drawn up for battle in the drollest manner, with batteries at either side of the road, some turned to the north, some to the south. The division commander explained that this was necessary, as the enemy were retreating in such haste they were everywhere.

Eager to organize a pursuit and order a general attack, Pilsudski was surprised and disappointed to find Warsaw still worried and anxious instead of rejoicing at the happy turn of events. To be sure, the town was not so hard pressed by the enemy, but there was much disquietude because of the Soviet advance toward Dantzig and attacks on the towns on the lower Vistula. He had a hard struggle to persuade them that Poland was already the victor. Was it possible the tide had turned so quickly, that the enemy sweeping all before them for two months had collapsed suddenly like a child's balloon? The news was too good to be true.

But he insisted that if they took full advantage of the situation, the Soviets could not escape disaster. He blamed himself afterwards for losing that day. At Warsaw they wanted to pursue half-way, not intensively. He should have taken it all into his own hands, using every man available. His colleagues wanted to keep the largest possible number of troops at the capital, to shield it from a shadowy fear. They thought the success could not last.

rally and advance again. There must be energetic pursuit and a push from all directions, to destroy the rest of the Bolshevist forces. On the eighteenth he started to Warsaw by motor. 23:

To his surprise he heard no cannon. People stopped his car enthusiastically to tell him that the enemy were fleeing on all sides in disorder and panic. They thought his journey was not safe, as the surrounding country was infested with marauding Soviet cavalry and dispersed soldiers. At one place he found some Poles drawn up for battle in the drollest manner, with batteries at either side of the road, some turned to the north, some to the south. The division commander explained that this was necessary, as the enemy were retreating in such haste they were everywhere.

Eager to organize a pursuit and order a general attack, Pilsudski was surprised and disappointed to find Warsaw still worried and anxious instead of rejoicing at the happy turn of events. To be sure, the town was not so hard pressed by the enemy, but there was much disquietude because of the Soviet advance toward Dantzic and attacks on the towns on the lower Vistula. He had a hard struggle to persuade them that Poland was already the victor. Was it possible the tide had turned so quickly, that the enemy sweeping all before them for two months had collapsed suddenly like a child's balloon? The news was too good to be true.

But he insisted that if they took full advantage of the situation, the Soviets could not escape disaster. He blamed himself afterwards for losing that day. At Warsaw they wanted to pursue half-way, not intensively. He should have taken it all into his own hands, using every man available. His colleagues wanted to keep the largest possible number of troops at the capital, to shield it from a shadowy fear. They thought the success could not last.

The Bolsheviks however had only one idea—flight. They fled without fighting, or they fought to gain time to flee. Once a whole army retreated before one Polish division. Pilsudski was displeased when one of his generals amused himself with taking ten thousand prisoners and forty cannon and many supplies instead of pursuing hotly. At Grodno and Bialystok there was severe fighting and thousands of prisoners were taken. One whole army was forced over the frontier into East Prussia and there disarmed. Another, encircled by a turning movement, was completely destroyed.

Tuchaczewski had lost more than half his force. The rest was a confused mass, useless from a military point of view. The Poles had sixty-six thousand prisoners, so many that feeding and guarding them was truly a problem; they took more than a thousand machine guns, two hundred and thirty cannon, and a mass of war material. To Pilsudski the struggle was not yet finished. Not delayed by his great success, he regrouped his army before the last enemy divisions had retreated in the north. In September he attacked the Russian detachments in the southeast and pushed them back beyond the frontier.

Tuchaczewski had not lost his courage, but assembled fragments of his divisions in the north, not far from Wilno. Reinforcements came to him from the east, but the men were unequipped and practically unshod, though it was autumn. However, with an improved morale, the commander-in-chief thought he had a good chance of regaining his position. His new front on the Niemen was about where the line had been in July, but how different the situation was! Which side would attack first?

Pilsudski now had the superiority in number, equipment and morale; he could take the offensive with almost no risk. He won the battle of the Niemen by a combination of surprise and quickness. While his right and

center attacked, he led the left wing in person and fell on the rear of the Soviets, breaking every attempt of the enemy to turn by an inflexible resistance. Fifty thousand prisoners, almost the whole Russian army, were captured and the victory was complete. Yet the experts had advised against this campaign, saying he was following up the retreat too far.

The Soviet government asked for an armistice. Fighting stopped the middle of October and the peace treaty was signed at Riga the following March. There was no more talk of a "Curzon line" for the boundary, and no more talk of disarmament or establishing Soviet institutions in Poland. The frontier Pilsudski wanted was gained, the normal, historical frontier which is almost identical with the boundary existing after the second Partition.

Later when foreigners asked Pilsudski if he did not fear a Red Revolution in Poland, he replied, "If Providence wills, which I doubt, that the world makes the Russian experiment, we Poles will be the last people to make it. We are too close neighbors to Russia to let ourselves go easily to imitate her. When I saw Tucha-czewski marching in the steps of the Prince of Warsaw (the title of the Russian general who took the city in 1831), repeating slogans borrowed from Marx, I couldn't help citing the title of a brochure well known in Poland, by another great theorist of Socialism, Liebknecht, *Shall Europe Become Cossack?*"

He had defeated the enemies of Poland, but he had not silenced his personal enemies among the politicians. They were jealous of his success and wanted to belittle his fame. They gave the credit to luck, to the general commanding in the north, whose repulse of the Soviets was extremely helpful, but not the main offensive, and to the timely aid of the Missions sent by the Allies. The best answer to that last is the reply of General Wey-gand himself.

To a French journalist who talked with him in Warsaw on the twenty-first of August, he said, "The magnificent Polish victory will bring consequences of incalculable importance in the international situation. It consolidates the Polish state."

"Some of the Poles are hailing you as 'the saviour of Warsaw.'"

Came the quick rejoinder, "There is nothing in it. I beg you to fix French opinion on this important point. This victory which puts Warsaw in fete is a Polish victory, its operations were carried out by Polish generals following a Polish plan."

Weygand had undoubtedly helped, with the splendid technical aid of his staff officers. His energy in supervising details, his capacity for organization, his unrivalled experience brought order and method to the operations of the Polish army, which were necessary for success. He established the connection between Warsaw and Dantzig. But the strategy of the manouever was not that of Marshal Foch, brought to Pilsudski by General Weygand. It was the political opponents of the Polish commander-in-chief who insisted that the credit was due to the Frenchman. Is it not significant that he himself never put forward any claims to having won the battle of Warsaw?

The Poles were grateful for all the help of the two Missions. General Radcliffe was given the Polish Military Medal for services under fire, and other testimonials for his admirable work. General Weygand received the *Virtuti Militari* cross, and a sword of honor that had belonged to the sixteenth century Stefan Batory, perhaps the greatest of Polish kings. On the last day of the Missions in Poland, the city of Krakow gave them a banquet.

Pilsudski's opponents, envious of his power and influence, advanced another suggestion—that the capital was saved not by a battle, but by a miracle; the divine

intervention of the Virgin. Is it not interesting that this claim was not made by the common people, who in Poland are deeply religious, but by the opposition press, not made immediately, but some months after those tense, dramatic August days? "The miracle of the Vistula" was invented for the sole purpose of depriving Pilsudski of any glory.

The manouever of the Bug, as military experts say it should be called, instead of the battle of Warsaw, ranks as one of the decisive battles of the world. Europe's history would have been different had it ended differently. It was more than a battle, it was a contest between two civilizations. Nothing seemed more certain than that Warsaw would fall; indeed a German press agency announced its fall; at the eleventh hour it was saved not by actual fighting so much as by the principles of daring strategy, planned and executed by a man who had taught himself.

In no other decisive campaign did both commanders write a full account of their actions and their thoughts after the battle. The two accounts agree closely. In no other important campaign has the defeated general given such a clear and frank story of his operations. This first-hand information, from the two points of view, makes the manouever most interesting to military students. Pilsudski's book, *Rok 1920* (The Year 1920), published in a French translation with Tuchaczewski's lectures, is not only an account of the campaign and a criticism of his opponent's action, but a philosophical study of war. Page after page shows in casual reference his intense study of the operations of the World War.

It was in the second week of October of 1920 that the Polish troops entered Wilno. That city had had one occupation after another: the Germans for three years, the Bolsheviks, then the Legions, presenting it to Pilsudski as an Easter gift. When the great Soviet invasion came, the Poles had to evacuate Wilno in July and the enemy held it for a month: when they in turn re-

238 treated, three districts were occupied by the Lithuanians—and this included Wilno; for on the twelfth of July the Soviets and Lithuanians had signed a peace treaty which recognized this as Lithuanian territory.

After the battle of Warsaw and the energetic pursuit, the victorious Poles retook part of this land. Wilno was the crucial point. Pilsudski suggested its seizure to General Zeligowski, but the move must be made apparently on his own initiative and without his (Pilsudski's) encouragement or knowledge. Accordingly the general advanced with several divisions, largely men from this northern country.

There was fighting outside the city and the Poles took some Lithuanians prisoner. These men were sent into Wilno, to say that General Zeligowski did not want to carry on a war with Lithuania; that they were Wilno soldiers, returning from the war with the Bolsheviks. Indeed, one division was called "the children of Wilno." The Lithuanians, fearing that the thousands of Poles living in the city would start an insurrection, decided to evacuate it. The soldiers were impatient, but waited till three in the afternoon; when they entered the Lithuanians were leaving and there was no need for fighting.

Great crowds waited in the streets to welcome these last troops, this time their own soldiers. The first detachment, some cavalymen, were almost covered by the flowers thrown to them. The rifles of the infantry were hung with garlands. Polish the city remained, though Warsaw disavowed the act of Zeligowski in answer to the protests of the Allies.

With the many pressing questions to be discussed, the excited talk about Wilno gradually died down in the west of Europe. As Pilsudski had said, the Allies accepted a *fait accompli*. Their Council and later the League of Nations recognized the Polish-Lithuanian boundary.

Quite aside from Pilsudski's personal feeling for Wilno, it is easy to see how important that city was for

Poland. It is easy to understand that it was vital, not only for Poland, but for Europe, that Russia and Germany should not have a common frontier, which would have been the result if north of Poland lay East Prussia, belonging to Germany, and Lithuania, her henchman. But it is not so easy to approve Pilsudski's action on ethical grounds. On the seventh of October Poland had signed a preliminary armistice agreement in which a tentative boundary was laid down, to go into effect on the tenth; on the ninth came Zeligowski's *coup de main* and the Poles were in possession of Wilno. But is there any great historical figure whose career can stand an ethical X-ray in every detail?

Pilsudski had given to the Polish army a new psychology—not to die with honor, fighting against overwhelming forces, but to know how to defend Poland and be victorious. The danger to the nation over, the soldiers could return home. The Marshal sent them a last order of farewell.

"Soldiers! Two long years, the first of the free Poland, you have passed in the midst of hard labor and bloody efforts. You finished the war with magnificent victories, and the enemy, broken by you, has at last agreed to sign the preliminaries for the peace which is ardently desired.

"On my shoulders, as commander-in-chief, in your hands, as the defenders of the country, the nation has placed the heavy task of protecting the existence of Poland, of winning for her the general esteem, of giving her the free disposition of her destiny.

"I have already proposed to the government that a part of the land taken in the war should be given to those who fought for it, who bought it with their suffering and their blood. After the harvest of war, this soil awaits the harvest of peace. It awaits those who will change the sword into a plow. I wish for you, in this work of the future, as many peaceful victories as you have won in your work of war.

"Soldiers! You have made Poland strong, sure of herself, and free. You can be proud and satisfied that you have accomplished your duty. The country which in two years has succeeded in creating such a soldier can face the future tranquilly."

In November the Chief of State decorated the city of Lwow with the cross of *Virtuti Militari*, the only town in Poland to receive this signal honor.

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XIV.

BUILDING A STATE.

Pilsudski's work seemed completed. He had won independence for his country; he had fixed her frontiers on north and south, on west and east; he had repulsed invasions. But it was only on the surface that the task looked finished. He now had a harder battle for the inner consolidation of Poland.

His enemies were numerous, his followers few. After the war with the Bolsheviks he wanted to resign as commander-in-chief, resign as Chief of State, and live quietly. But he could not, for without him the government would collapse.

His greatest trouble was with the Sejm (pronounced same), the lower house of Parliament, but the more powerful. Its four hundred and forty-four members were divided into fourteen parties. Several groups were necessary to pass any measure. They combined for a brief time and then fell apart, and the bargaining had to begin again. Sometimes they seemed almost more intent on serving a party than on serving Poland and making the nation strong. The Cabinet depended on the Sejm and so was changed every few months.

At the beginning Pilsudski hoped Parliament would work along the right lines, as it was chosen with universal suffrage. But things did not come out so. Almost from the first day there was a contest between the Chief of State and the Sejm, he was always in battle with it. The majority was against him and though he was nominally

head of the government, he was opposed and fought at every turn. 241

His friends urged him to dissolve Parliament and become dictator. He refused—for himself, because he was too old; for Poland, because such an action would open the road to any adventurer who wanted to start a revolution.

“It is my boast,” he said, “that I created in Poland conditions in which the nation could develop its own creative capability, and that I never broke that law.”

He saw that Parliament was governing as in the eighteenth century, but with a radical change of social structure. Instead of nobles the members were workmen, peasants, townsmen, but they were infected with the same spirit of disorder, the same shallow carelessness for the welfare of the state. On them rested the destiny of Poland, the hopes of Polish democracy. Like ghosts of the past, methods and abuses that had once caused the downfall of the nation rose again from the grave. All enlightened citizens saw this situation and foretold the fatal results to which such governmental disorder would surely bring the reborn state. When Pilsudski urged unity and the reconciliation of parties, everybody admitted this was the right advice, but nobody followed it.

Over and over in this period of internal chaos and impotence he deplored the fact that the Poles who had been so meek and submissive to foreign rulers, now knew no limits to the confusion and disagreement in their own government. He tried in vain to open the eyes of the old political parties, urging them to stop quarreling and establish order so as to give authority and strength to the state.

Once at a conference at the Belvedere several ministers gave voice to their discouragement, saying that the Sejm was quarreling and did not realize the dangers Poland was facing.

“Yes,” replied Pilsudski, “just like this piece of cloth (picking up the table cover in his strong hands)—it has

242 no feeling, it has no strength. Best pour oil on it and burn it. All this must be changed. It will be changed.

"I will go anywhere," he went on earnestly, "I will do anything to make our public into a strong nation—with strong loves, with a strong will, with—if need be—strong hates also. I will put before them such big issues, questions so vital that they will be forced to take sides, for or against."

The greatest fight between him and the Sejm came over the drafting of the Constitution. The Conservative party, his bitterest foes, knew that he was the logical candidate for the presidency and that they were not strong enough to prevent his election, so they wrote into the Constitution such extravagant powers for the Sejm, such limited, hedged about powers for the president that, once in office, they thought he would be powerless. It was a Constitution on the eighteenth century French model. A severely limited executive was something the Austrian Poles had learned from Vienna. The president could sign his name to laws passed by Parliament and could open exhibitions and unveil monuments. He could summon Parliament, but he could not initiate legislation, he could not veto acts of Parliament, he could not dissolve that body without the consent of an impossible majority of its members. He was nicknamed "the prisoner of the Belvedere."

Sejm and Senate in joint session unanimously elected Pilsudski President of Poland. He refused the office, for he would not be a straw man, the powerless head of a quarreling country. Then his friend, Gabriel Narutowicz (Nah-ru-to'-veets), was chosen president—his election made possible by bargaining for the eighty votes of the minorities; German and Ukrainian and Jewish delegates held the balance of power—a strange situation.

After the Constitution was proclaimed there were new elections for Parliament which met at the end of November, 1922. Pilsudski, clad in the gray uniform of the

Legions, addressed the members. He spoke of the great difficulties to be overcome, but added optimistically, "I have too much confidence in the patriotism of the nation and of its elected representatives to doubt for an instant that these difficulties will be solved and the state soon enter on a period of prosperity, thanks to the common effort of all its children."

The Conservative party launched a violent campaign against Narutowicz in its newspapers. They were full of wild, inflammatory statements. As he drove to the Parliament building to take the oath of office, the crowds in the streets threw snowballs at his carriage and tried to block the road. Cavalry had to be summoned to disperse them. In his inaugural speech he said that he intended to "follow Pilsudski's policy of peace, justice and impartiality toward all Polish citizens, without distinction of origin or opinion."

Two days later, at an art exhibition he had opened, he was assassinated by an unbalanced professor, excited by those vicious press attacks. Party passion ran so high that foreign observers thought Poland on the verge of civil war. But this tragedy shocked and sobered the nation so that the danger was averted. The president's death was a great blow to Pilsudski, who meditated on the reasons for it.

Senate and Sejm then elected as president Stanislaus Wojciechowski (Voi-che-hof'-skee), an old friend of Pilsudski's from conspiracy days, the Comrade "Edmund" who had brought *Robotnik's* press from London, who had frequently gone with Wiktor to carry a "brunette" full of *bibula*, and when they slept under the stars had shared the overcoat they owned in common.

A new Cabinet was chosen, from the Conservative party, which was responsible for the murder of Narutowicz. They took no steps to show their disapproval of that act. The murderer was not sentenced for many months, but was glorified as a hero and martyr. Some

244 Warsaw ladies put flowers on the window sill of his cell. Some people argued that he was not responsible individually; the unsettled state of public affairs was the real cause; therefore he should not be put to death. More than a year passed, the man still lived—and the Conservative party was in power. To Pilsudski these things indicated the road Poland was taking. He felt sick at heart. Sadly he saw that party politics could wreck democracy.

The international situation of Poland was weak. The Powers were considering granting territorial compensations to other countries at her expense. This made him see again the necessity of a strong government, ready to act with decision. What should he do—throw out the Sejm, or leave the nation to work out her own salvation? Once he intervened and settled a dispute about the pay of the army. Once he practically dismissed a Cabinet. But for the most part he kept on with his work at the Ministry of War, and watched the Sejm where faction ruled instead of patriotism, where men whispered instead of openly accusing, where party passions with all their uncertainties destroyed one Cabinet after another.

His enemies became more active and bolder. Around him raged jealousy and suspicion and distrust and hatred. Very bitter were the attacks against him, a campaign of slander where all evil seethed on the surface. It spared nothing—not his wife and children, not his friends, not himself. He was charged with being a thief and Parliament appointed a commission to search for the royal insignia he had stolen. He was charged with treason, with entering into some understanding with the enemy and betraying the country in time of war. But never once, then or later, did his most bitter enemy ever say he had taken public moneys; no one could charge graft in his Ministry.

Knowing his power in Poland, realizing how great his influence was, his opponents did not try to remove him

from office or bring suit against him in the courts. It was rather a campaign of spitting and mud slinging. 245

"The mind that can bring itself to such things," he said once, "must be full of mud; and such actions are christened with the lofty words 'national' and 'patriotic'!"

Yet the atmosphere of gloom caused by these constant calumnies and slanders weighed upon him. He knew they were a result of the years of enslavement. Such a *milieu* of intrigue made him indignant, for he was straightforward, used to clear, concise arguments, debate in the open. There were wild stories in circulation, disgusting and immoral, and savage lies about him and his friends.

He had hoped the most dangerous period for Poland was past and that she could enter on an era of upbuilding, but the better groups in Parliament broke down through weakness. Ambitious men, adventurers, members who sold their votes got the upper hand, although there were some fine, intelligent individuals among the opposition. To Pilsudski the corruption in political parties, their manouvers and intrigues were intolerable.

Another premier came into office, again the peasant Witos, whose party had made a bargain with the Conservatives. A great worker, he had done much to unite the peasants and bring them to support the state. With the virtues of his class he had also its faults. Pilsudski suddenly resigned, refusing to serve under "such people," as he described the parties in power.

Asked why such a worker, a man who had been so honored, left his post, he answered frankly, "I respect my own life history, for myself and for my children, and I want to preserve it intact for future historians. If any one criticises me that I can't manage the Polish nation, at least no one would dare deprive me of my war laurels. I covered with glory the arms of Poland and have given them, in the first days of the reborn state, a magnificent victory."

With bitterness and disgust in his voice he went on, "From my windows in the General Staff building I see the statue of Jozef Poniatowski who perished in the mire of the river at Leipzig. I am dragged down into the mire—mire is the symbol of Poland's treatment of her leaders."

(This was fortunately only a temporary feeling of despondency. In a few years Pilsudski was to be a striking exception to the rule that Poland never appreciates her great men until after their deaths.)

The Sejm passed a resolution that "Jozef Pilsudski, both as Chief of State and as commander-in-chief, has rendered meritorious service to the nation." It was a gesture—words only. They voted him a pension—about three thousand dollars a year. He would not accept it for himself, but paid it over to the endowment fund of the University of Wilno.

Before he left Warsaw, his friends and admirers organized a banquet in his honor. They drank his health and waited eagerly for his speech. It was no recital of his personal grievances, but the frank expression of his opinions of Polish public life and the motives for his retirement.

"I do not in the least wish to make an impression of tragedy," his speech ended. "I only wish to state that here is filth, and that it is given honor and power in Poland. I wish to say that if Poland succeeded in reforming the republic in the first period, it began subsequently to fall back into its old habits and that great efforts are necessary to restore Poland again to the path of reform."

Then he added, with a touch of pathos, "For myself, gentlemen, I ask you to remember me. I ask for a long, long rest so that I may breathe the air, so that I may be as free as you, and gay as were the comrades of the First Brigade who by their labor secured me my greatest honors."

Were his opponents afraid of his strength? of his genius? They wanted the old Poland of many parties. He wanted a strong Poland which could be built only on a strong government with a strong Sejm. But politically the people were not yet ready to grapple with great prob-